

***GENESIS***  
***THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS***  
***A Study of Creation in Scripture***

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*“The Creation” by Lucas Cranach the Elder  
Woodcut for the Title Page of Luther’s First Complete Bible - 1534*

# *Introduction*

## *The Name of the Book*

The ancient Bible of the Hebrew people begins with the “*Torah*,” which literally means “*instruction*.” The equation of the Torah with Law is most unfortunate for the Torah is replete with Gospel. Dr. Horace Hummel goes so far as to insist that if a single-word translation of “*Torah*” is required, that one word ought to be “*Gospel*” - for the heart of the Torah is “*the good news of God’s own meeting of His demand in the covenant - and in the promises attached to it.*” (Hummel. p. 62) The “*Septuagint*,” the Greek translation of the Old Testament completed during the inter-testamental period, refers to the Torah as the “*Pentatuch*,” which means the “*five books*” or the “*five volumed.*” This designation was based on the rabbinical tradition of dividing the Torah into five segments, the so-called “*five fifths of the law*” or the “*five books of Moses.*” By 500 A.D., the standard Masoretic text of the Old Testament lists each of these five sections separately, naming them from the opening words of each book. Accordingly the first segment is called “*Bereshith*” from the Hebrew words for “*In the Beginning.*” The Greek Septuagint’s translation of these words as “*Genesis*” has become the name of the book in the English Bible.

## *Authorship*

The historic consensus of both Judaism and Christianity holds that the prophet Moses is the author of Genesis along with the other four books of the Pentatuch. The Hebrew Bible is traditionally divided into three sections, the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings. Accordingly, the Bible of Judaism is called the “*Tanakh*” from the Hebrew titles of its three segments - “*Torah*” (*the Law of Moses*) - “*Neviim*” (*Prophets*) - “*Kethubim*” (*Writings*). Jesus reflects this threefold division when He says: “***Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.***” (Luke 24:44).

The text of that portion of the Pentatuch which we call Genesis does not identify a specific author. However, the remaining portions of the Torah are replete with references to Mosaic authorship (i.e. Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Leviticus 1:1; 4:1; 6:1,8,19,24; 7:22,28; 8:1; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 1:1; 17:18,19; 27:1-8; 31:9; 31:24). As previously noted, the formal division of the Torah into five separate books is a relatively late development. The books are clearly inter-dependant. Each successive book develops and expands the material of its



*“Moses” by J. James Tissot*

predecessor. The Book of Exodus literally begins with the conjunction “and” indicating that it is a continuation of the book which precedes it. In view of the unity of the Pentateuch, both substantively and structurally, the conclusion that the same author who wrote Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy also wrote Genesis is inescapable. The Mosaic authorship of the Torah is repeatedly affirmed in the Old Testament. In the solemn charge which God gave to Joshua upon his succession to Moses as the leader of Israel, the Lord commended the Torah to Joshua with these words: ***“Be strong and very courageous, be very careful to obey all the law My servant Moses gave you...Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.”*** (Joshua 1: 7-8) David’s charge to his son Solomon is remarkably similar in its emphasis upon the Torah, the Law of Moses: ***“Be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires; Walk in His ways, and keep His decrees and commands, His laws and requirements, as written in the law of Moses.”*** (1 Kings 2:3). Late in the Old

Testament era, Ezra is described as ***“a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel had given...Ezra had devoted himself to the study and the observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”*** (Ezra 7:6,10).

The identification of Moses as the author of the Torah continues in the New Testament. In reference to the first segment of the Hebrew Bible, Jesus asserts: ***“Your accuser is Moses on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say.”*** (John 5:45-47). A few chapters later, in John 7, Jesus is attacked by the Jews because He performed miracles on the Sabbath day. The Lord notes that the Jews themselves practiced circumcision

on the eighth day after birth even when the eighth day was a Sabbath. The covenant of circumcision is recorded in Genesis 17. In reference to this passage Jesus says:

***“Has not Moses given you the Law...Yet because Moses gave you circumcision (but actually it did not come from Moses but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with Me?”*** (John 7:22-23)

Later, in the Book of Acts, the text again refers to circumcision as ***“the custom taught by Moses....The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 15:1,5) In the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus, Abraham refers to the Old Testament by saying: ***“They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them.*** (Luke 16:29). St. Paul describes the Old Testament in the same way in his address to Agrippa: ***“I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen.”*** (Acts 26:22). The same phrase is used in Acts 28 as Paul attempted to demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Messiah on the basis of the Old Testament to the Jews of Rome - ***“From morning til evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”*** (Acts 28:23).

Lutheran commentator H.C. Leupold summarizes the evidence succinctly: ***“To Christ and His apostles the Torah (the Pentatuch) was Mosaic.”*** (Leupold, I, p. 7). John C. Jeske concurs: ***“The Bible knows of only one human author of the Pentatuch, and that author is Moses.”*** (Jeske, p.2) This is the view of historic Christendom and Judaism. For anyone who accepts the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible and recognizes Holy Scripture as the Word of God the testimony of our Lord and His inspired prophets and apostles must be absolutely conclusive. Moses is the author of Genesis and the Pentatuch.

## **Structure**

The structure of the Book of Genesis is revealed by the repetition of the phrase - ***“These are the generations of...”*** This ***“toledot formula”*** (based on the Hebrew word ***“toledot”*** which means ***“generations,” “offspring”*** or ***“descendants”***) recurs throughout the first 36 chapters of Genesis (Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 36:1). In each case it signifies the beginning of a new segment of the story

of salvation. Scholars indicate that this approach was characteristic of literary style in the ancient Near East during the period when written records were kept in cuneiform alphabet on clay tablets. The wedge shaped letters of cuneiform writing

were imprinted in moist clay with a reed stylus. The clay tablets came in a broad variety of sizes and shapes. The title or heading at the top of the tablet served to identify the contents of a tablet or the continuation of a narrative in a series of tablets. This pattern in Genesis strongly suggests that God provided Moses with pre-existent sources of great antiquity from which the prophet was inspired to compose the book of Genesis. Even without the benefit of modern archaeological discoveries Martin Luther, with characteristically penetrating insight, had postulated the existence of ancient sources for Genesis. In his masterful commentary on the book Luther remarks: *“I think that Abraham composed a little book from Adam up to his own time.”* (LW,4, p.308) The text of Genesis suggests the existence of eleven such *“toledoth”* tablets:

Tablet 1: Genesis 1:1 - 2:4. The Creation of the Universe

Tablet 2: Genesis 2:5 - 4:26. The Generations of Heaven and Earth

Tablet 3: Genesis 5:1 - 6:8. The Generations of Adam

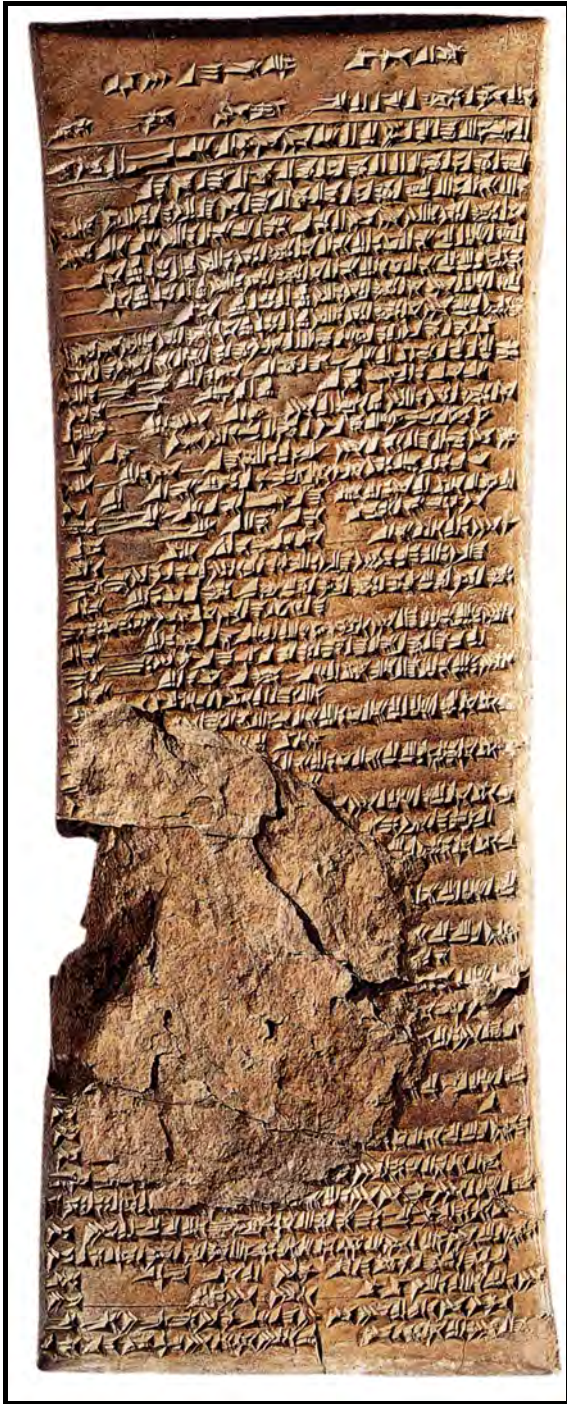
Tablet 4: Genesis 6:9 -9:29. The Generations of Noah

Tablet 5: Genesis 10:1 -11:9. The Generations of the Sons of Noah

Tablet 6: Genesis 11:10-26. The Generations of Shem

Tablet 7: Genesis 11:27 - 25:11. The Generations of Terah

Tablet 8: Genesis 25:12-18. The Generations of Ishmael



*Cuneiform Clay Tablet from the Library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh*

Tablet 9: Genesis 25:19 - 35:29. The Generations of Isaac

Tablet 10: Genesis 36:1- 37:1. The Generations of Esau

Tablet 11: Genesis 37:1 -50:26. The Generations of Jacob

The clear focus of Genesis, and indeed all of Scripture, is God's plan for the salvation of humankind. This is no abstract account of origins, nor even a family history, unless that family is the people of God, the household of faith. This is the story of that which God has done in love to accomplish the redemption of the unique creature whom He fashioned in His own image and likeness.



*“In the Beginning Was the Word” Briton Rivere*



# *The Creation of the Universe*

## *Genesis 1:1 - 2:3*

### *Genesis 1: 1-2*

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

**“In the beginning”** - The Bible opens with two majestic Hebrew words, “*Bereshith Elohim*” (“*In the beginning God*”). In a simple, and yet incredibly profound way these words define and explain the origin of all things. They have been aptly described as “*the most tremendous ever penned.*” (Boice, p. 24). **“In the beginning,”** that is, at the point in which time-space-matter reality comes into being there is only God. He is “*self-existent,*” the only independent reality. Unlike all the idols of the nations which are merely the personification of natural forces the true God is “*transcendent.*” God exists apart from and above the reality that He brings into being. He has always been and will always be. He does not have a source, He is the source of everything else that exists. Everything else has a starting point and comes from something else except the one God. According to Scripture, it is this uniqueness which defines the identity of God and necessitates Biblical monotheism - the belief that there is one God and one God alone (cf. Exodus 3:14). That is to say, if God is what the Bible says He is then there can be



*“In the Beginning - God” Luther Bible Engraving - Nuremberg 1770*

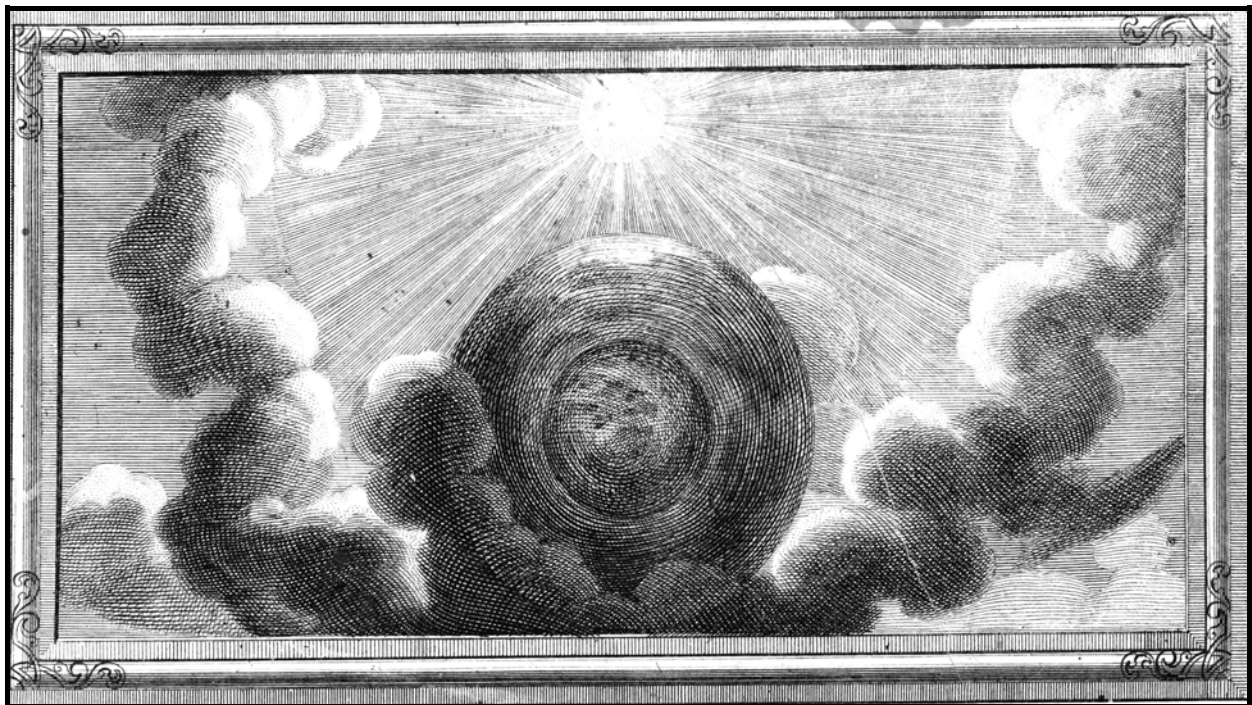
only one God. His uniqueness is of the essence of His nature. The **“beginning”** marks the origin of all that which God the Creator fashions. Before the **“beginning”** there was only God. Nothing else existed. There was no other reality. The Hebrew noun appears without the article, much like a proper noun or a title. Isaiah uses the term in the same way (without the definite article) to assert the utter uniqueness of God in Isaiah 46:9-10: **“I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning.”** Leupold correctly translates the term in the context of Genesis 1 as *“the absolute beginning of created things.”* (Leupold, p. 39). In his classic *Bible History Commentary*, Werner Franzmann notes the profound significance and majesty of the Bible’s opening words:

*“The very first statement in the Bible is the answer to a question which has always engaged, yes, haunted, the mind of man: “How did all things begin?” The answer is clear and satisfying: **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** It does not argue whether there is a God or not. It simply places before us the God of unlimited power and majesty as the Author of all things and all living beings. This God, with whom nothing is impossible, called all things into being in a way that agrees with His nature as the Almighty; He created the heaven and the earth, that is, He brought them into being out of nothing. It is enough for Him to will that all things spring into existence and to speak the word expressing that will.”* (Franzmann, p. 12)

**“God”** - The Hebrew name of God which occurs in this text is *“Elohim.”* It is derived from a root which means *“to fear”* or *“to reverence.”* This designation is used 2,570 times in the Old Testament. It serves to emphasize the majesty and omnipotence of God. The Hebrew noun is in the plural form. This is an implicit reference to the doctrine of the divine Trinity - a plural name with a singular meaning to describe a God who is one in three and three in one (cf. Genesis 1:26).

**“created”** - This verb, Hebrew - *“bara”* is never used of other than divine activity in Scripture. God alone has the capacity to bring reality into being from non-reality. Although in and of itself the verb does not absolutely preclude the use of pre-existing material, in its strictest sense *“bara”* means *“to make something out of nothing.”* (Latin - *“creatio ex nihilo”*). That is clearly the meaning of the term in this verse. The divine Creator calls the raw material of the universe into being out of nothing (cf. Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 33:6-9). *“By an act*

*of His, God created all the components which would later constitute the universe as we know it, including matter, energy, space, and time. On the first day, God created all of His raw materials, just like a homebuilder assembles all of his building materials at the site before assembling them into a house.” (Jeske, p. 11)*  
**“the heavens and the earth”** - This phrase refers to the entire created universe, that which the Greeks called the “*cosmos*.” The **“heavens and the earth”**



***“In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth” Luther Bible Engraving - 1770***

encompass all existence other than God Himself. **“The heavens and the earth”** are equated with **“all things”** in Isaiah 44:24 as God declares: **“I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by Myself.”** (Isaiah 44:24; cf. also Joel 3:15-16 in which the sun, moon, and stars are explicitly included in **“the heavens and the earth”**). Linguists describe this form of expression as **“merism,”** that is, expressing totality through two contrasting parts. Dr. Henry Morris offers the intriguing insight that in the context of this verse the two Hebrew nouns **“shamayim”** (**“heavens”**) and **“erets”** (**“earth”**) might well be translated respectively as **“space”** and **“matter.”** Thus, the opening phrase of the Bible describes the origin of the essential components of our reality: time (**“beginning”**), space (**“heavens”**), and matter (**“earth”**). St. Augustine shared this view, even in what modern man would consider a pre-scientific age:

*“Scripture called heaven and earth that formless matter of the universe, which was changed into formed and beautiful natures by God’s ineffable command...This heaven and earth, which were confused and mixed up, were suited to receive forms from God their Maker.” (Louth, p. 1)*



*“The First Day of Creation” - Luther Bible Engraving - Nuremberg 1770 - “God formed the clod of the earth by the power of His Word. In the same way He separated the darkness from the light. O my heart, trust in the power which created all things. Cling to the day of salvation and abandon the dark night of sin.”*

*“Now the earth was formless and empty...” - After Genesis 1:1, every subsequent verse begins with the Hebrew conjunction “waw.” This linking word is typically translated in English as “and” or “then.” The NIV renders the conjunction “now” which does not effectively stress the continuity of these events. This “waw” structure serves to emphasize the sequential and chronological connection between the events described. Each action follows directly upon the action described in the verse preceding it. This observation becomes particularly significant in view of the misguided attempt by some conservative Protestants to insert a massive “Gap” between the first two verses of Genesis 1. The “Gap Theory,” most prominently advocated in the Scofield Reference Bible, suggests that the present universe is*

God's second attempt, fashioned from the ruin which resulted from God's judgment upon the original creation. The Gap is also designed to provide the flexibility to insert the vast geological ages required by Darwinian evolution. This foolishness is not only scientifically impossible, it theologically pernicious and clearly inconsistent with the text of Genesis 1.

While Verse 1 has described in the broadest strokes the origin of the most basic components - time, space, and matter - from which the entire universe was to be fashioned, Verse 2 proceeds without delay to the crux of the matter. This is not an abstract scientific or philosophical treatise. Everything which God creates, from the vast reaches of the farthest galaxies to the intricacies of the planet upon which we dwell, relates to His loving intention to create man. Thus, the Biblical account of creation is unequivocally "*anthropocentric*" (centered on man). The stuff of the universe has been called into being from nothing but it is not yet suitable for the purpose for which it was designed. The text reports that "*the earth*" (Hebrew - "*erets*") *was formless and empty.*" (Hebrew - "*tohu waw bohu*"). At this point in the narrative, it is probably best to continue to understand the Hebrew noun "*erets*" as a more general reference to "*matter*" rather than a specific reference to the planet earth. God did not merely create this planet as a home for man. All the universe, as many galaxies as there may be, are included in the perfect environment which God fashioned for humankind. But at this point, God has not yet brought that raw material to its final state. It is "*formless and empty.*" These onomatopoeic Hebrew words summarize the unsuitable condition of matter in its preliminary form. The combination of the two rhyming themes



*"The First Day" - Edward Burne Jones*



*“God the Creator” - 13<sup>th</sup> Century Illumination*

rhyiming terms re-enforces the point, much like our English words “*helter-skelter*,” “*hodge-podge*,” “*willy-nilly*,” “*shilly-shally*,” etc. The word “*tohu*” occurs twenty times in the Old Testament, most frequently (eleven times) in the book of Isaiah. In those texts it appears parallel to words for desert, wilderness, wind, nothingness and emptiness. The most direct parallel to its usage here is found in Isaiah 45:18-19 - ***“For this is what the Lord says, He who created the heavens, He is God; He who fashioned and made the earth, He founded it; He did not create it to be empty (Hebrew - “tohu”) but inhabited - He says, “I am the Lord and there is no other.”*** (Cf. also Deuteronomy 32:10; Job 26:7; Isaiah 24:10; 29:21; 34:11; 40:17,23; 41:29; 49:4; 59:4). Although used much less frequently, only three times in the Old Testament, “*bohu*” carries a very similar connotation. In all three of its Biblical occurrences (here, Isaiah 34:11; and Jeremiah 4:23) it appears together with “*tohu*” - ***“God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos (“tohu”) and the plumb line of desolation (“bohu”).*** (Isaiah 34:11) ***“I looked at the earth and it was formless (“tohu”) and empty (“bohu”) and at the heavens and their light was gone.”*** (Jeremiah 4:23) The combination of these words conveys a sense of desolation and disorder. At this stage, matter is not yet ready to carry out the purpose for which it was created, namely human habitation.

*“The created cosmos was a tri-universe of time, space, and matter. Initially there were no stars or planets, only the basic matter component of the space-time-matter continuum. The elements which were to be formed into the planet earth were at first only elements, not yet formed, but nevertheless comprising the basic matter.” (Morris, p. 50)*

Hebrew scholar Umberto Cassuto of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem uses the image of the potter and his clay to describe the sense of the text:

*“Just as a potter, when he wishes to fashion a beautiful vessel, takes first a lump of clay, and places it on his wheel in order to mould it according to his wish, so the Creator first prepared for Himself the raw material of the universe with a view to giving it afterwards order and life...the whole material was an undifferentiated, unorganized, confused and lifeless agglomeration.” (Cassuto, p. 23)*



*“The First Day of Creation” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

**“Darkness was over the surface of the deep.”** - The chaos of the unformed matter is further emphasized in this phrase. The natural forces which govern and order our universe had not yet been created. All is motionless and still, cloaked in impenetrable darkness, the total absence of light which did not yet exist. The phrase recalls another

of the great assertions of God's uniqueness and absolute sovereignty from the book of Isaiah: ***"I am the Lord and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do these things."*** (Isaiah 45: 6-7). The NIV's translation positions the darkness ***"over the surface of the deep."*** The Hebrew noun *"tehom,"* derived from a root which means *"to resound,"* typically refers to the surging depths of the ocean. At this point, however, the formation of the earth and the separation of the land and the seas had not yet occurred. The reference must, therefore, be understood more broadly to refer to the *"vast conglomerate of matter"* (Leupold, p. 47) from which the Creator would fashion all the planets and stars of the universe. *"The picture presented is one of the basic material elements sustained in a pervasive watery matrix throughout the darkness of space."* (Morris, p. 50) Even the prepositional phrase ***"over the surface"*** would seem to be anachronistic for neither the earth, nor any of the rest of the planets, have yet been formed. The Hebrew word *"panim"* (literally - *"faces"*) carries the sense of presence and is often translated as *"in the presence of."* That would seem to be a better translation in this context. The sense of the passage is then that the chaotic mass of primordial matter was surrounded by a vast sea of darkness. Henry Morris places the meaning of the text in the context of science:

*"Elements of matter and molecules of water were present, but not yet energized. The force of gravity was not yet functioning to draw such particles together into a coherent mass with a definite form. Neither were the electromagnetic forces yet in operation and everything was in darkness. The physical universe had come into existence, but everything was still and dark - no form, no motion, no light."* (Morris, p. 51)

The Book of Proverbs offers an intriguing glimpse of this primordial mass shrouded in endless darkness using the same Hebrew terminology. The reference is part of a triumphant song of praise from the Word of God, the second Person of the holy Trinity, as the personification of divine Wisdom. Jesus exults:

***"The Lord brought Me forth as the first of His works, before His deeds of old.  
I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.  
When there were no oceans, I was given birth,  
When there were no springs abounding with water;  
Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,  
Before He made the earth, or its fields, or any of the dust of the world.  
I was there when He set the heavens in place,***



*When He marked out the horizons on the face of the deep.  
When He established the clouds above,  
And fixed securely the fountains of the deep,  
When He gave the sea its boundary  
So that the waters could not overstep His command.  
And when He marked out the foundations of the earth.  
Then I was the craftsman at His side.”* (Proverbs 8:22-30)

The Proverbs text uses the same Hebrew noun, “*tehom*,” in verses 24 and 27 - “*When there were no oceans I was given birth.*” “*When He marked out the horizons on the face of the deep.*” In the second phrase the word “*horizons*” (Hebrew - “*chug*”) refers to the circular line at the limit of man’s vision which indicates the curvature, the sphericity of the earth (cf. Isaiah 40:22; Job 22:14). Thus does our Lord affirm His divine pre-existence, reminding us that before this planet came to be, He was. Peter also alludes to primordial waters of creation. “*But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water.*” (2 Peter 3:5)



*“The First and Second Days of Creation” by Johan Teufel - 1572*

*“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”* - The Hebrew words “*ruach elohim*” (NIV - “*the Spirit of God*”) have elicited considerable discussion among the commentators. In the Hebrew language, the noun “*ruach*” (“*spirit*”) is also the word for “*wind*,” “*breath*,” and “*life*.” This etymology is the result of the practical

observation that air in motion, breathing, is synonymous with animal life. In this text, the combination “*ruach elohim*” - “***the Spirit of God***” - identifies the third person of the divine Trinity, the life-giving Breath of God. Only those whose own theological prejudices make it impossible for them to acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament, particularly at this early stage of Old Testament revelation, could fail to recognize the reference. This is the Holy Spirit of God, here revealed to have been active and involved in the work of creation. Ephraem the Syrian, a great Bible teacher and hymnist of the fourth century writes:

*“It is appropriate for us to learn here that the Spirit hovered in order for us to learn that the work of creation was held in common with the Spirit by the Father and the Son. The Father spoke. The Son created. And so it was also right that the Spirit offer its work, clearly shown through its hovering, in order to demonstrate its unity with the other persons. Thus we learn that all was brought to perfection and accomplished by the Trinity.”* (Louth, p. 6)

The Spirit’s role in creation is also clearly affirmed elsewhere in Scripture. “***By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth.***” (Psalm 33:6) “***How many are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number - living things both large and small...When You send Your Spirit they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.***” (Psalm 104:24-30) The use of the verb “***was hovering***” (Hebrew - “*rachaph*”) with “*ruach elohim*” strengthens this identification. Forms of the same verb only occur twice elsewhere in the Old Testament. It is used in Deuteronomy 32:11 to depict God’s care and protection of Israel: “***He shielded him and cared for him, He guarded him as the apple of His eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads his wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.***” In Jeremiah 23:9 it describes the fearful of bones in anticipation of God’s judgment: “***My heart is broken within me, all my bones tremble.***” (cf. Ezekiel 37) In every instance, the verb describes motion, moving to and fro rapidly and repeatedly. Morris suggests the English “*vibrate*” as the most appropriate translation of the verb and relates the phrase to the energizing of the universe.

*“As the vibrant energy of God’s omnipresent Spirit began to flow outward and to permeate the cosmos, gravitational forces were activated and water and earth particles came together to form a great*

*sphere moving through space. Other particles would soon come together also to form sun, moon, and stars throughout the universe. There was now a “compass” on the face of the deep and the formless earth had assumed the beautiful form of a perfect sphere. It was now ready for light and heat and other forms of enlivening energy.” (Morris, p. 52)*

The Greek equivalent of this Hebrew verb is used in the only other text in the Bible which specifically speaks of the Holy Spirit moving something - 2 Peter 1:21 - ***“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along (Greek - “phero”) by the Holy Spirit.”*** The parallel uses of the word suggest a fascinating similarity between the Spirit’s role in energizing the primeval universe and His inspiration of the written Word of God.



***“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” by John Martin***



*God Separated the Light from the Darkness” by Edward Burne-Jones*

### ***Genesis 1:3-5***

***And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day” and the darkness He called “night.” And there was evening and there was morning - the first day.***

***“And God said, “Let there be light.”*** - The Evangelist St. John provides inspired commentary on these words in the opening chapter of His Gospel. He tells us that the creative Word of God is Jesus Christ.

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made: without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it.”*** (John 1:1-5)

John’s assertion of the crucial role played by Christ in creation is affirmed throughout Holy Writ. In Proverbs 8:30 Jesus declares: ***“I was the craftsman by His side.”*** St. Paul’s magnificent Christological hymn acknowledges the same truth:



*“The Creation” by Melchior Küsel - 1702*

***“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:15-17)***

Thus, in the clear light of the New Testament, all three persons of the Holy Trinity in the opening verses of the creation account. God the Father is the Creator and Source of all things (Genesis 1:1). God the Son is the creative Word through which all things come into being (Genesis 1:3). God the Holy Spirit is the Lifegiver who enlivens and energizes all things (Genesis 1:2).

Creation occurs by divine command. The Hebrew is significantly more forceful than its English counterpart. The text of the traditional Latin Vulgate conveys the vigorous imperative more forcefully. God’s first recorded words are *“Fiat lux!”* Hence creation through the agency of God’s Word is often called *“Fiat Creation.”* (From the Latin verb *“feri”* - *“let there be”*). The Hebrew verb is *“hayah”* - *“to become.”* Thus a

literal translation would read - *“Become!...And it became.”*

The phrase **“*And God said*”** recurs ten times throughout the creation account forming the structure of the story of the origin of all things (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,28,29). The author of Hebrews clearly states: **“*By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*”** (Hebrews 11:3). Unlike the often empty words of men, the Word of God is efficacious and powerful. That which God says, is. **“*For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded and it stood firm.*”** (Psalm 33:9) The prophet Isaiah assures the people that the Word of God has power that does not and cannot fail:

***“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out of My mouth: it will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”***  
(Isaiah 55:8-11)

This language is, of course, anthropomorphic, that is, describing God or His actions as if He were a human being. Such language is a condescension to our limitations. The nature of God’s speaking the mighty word of creation is beyond human comprehension and expression. St. Augustine wisely advises: *“We ought to understand that God did not say “Let there be light!” by a sound brought forth from the lungs or by the tongue and teeth. Such thoughts are those of persons physically pre-occupied. To be wise in accord with the flesh is death. “Let there be light!” was spoken ineffably.”* (Louth, p.)

That which God calls into being is **“*light.*”** At the divine command a brilliant new reality comes into being and light blazes across the universe. The creation of light energy precedes the creation of the light-bearers, the sun, the moon, and the stars. They will not be formed until the fourth day. Victor Hamilton offers this helpful assessment of the initial creation of light prior to the creation of the heavenly bodies which would subsequently provide light:

***“The Bible begins and ends by describing an untarnished world that is filled with light, but not sun (cf. Revelation 22:5). Should not the One who is Himself called “Light” (1 John 1:5) have at His disposal many sources by which He dispatches light into His creation? Just as Genesis***

*I says there can be a day and light without sun, so Matthew 2 says there can be a son without a father. Calvin comments: "Therefore the Lord, by the very order of creation, bears witness that He holds in His hands the light, which He is able to impart to us without the sun or moon."* (Hamilton, p. 121)

Luther's observations on this point demonstrate a typical and commendable desire to be bound by the literal meaning of the words of the Biblical text.

*"Of what sort, then, was the light by which the unformed mass of heaven and earth was illuminated? Although neither sun nor stars had been created, the text makes it clear that this light was true and physical...Although it is difficult to say what sort of light it was, nevertheless, I do not agree that we should depart from the rules of language or that we should by force read meanings into words. Moses says plainly that there was light, and he counts this day as the first of creation. Therefore, I am of the opinion that this was true light."* (LW, AE, 1, p.19)



*"Let There Be Light!" By Gustav Dore*

***"And God saw that the light was good."*** - This affirmation of the essential goodness of all that which the Lord God had made is repeated seven times throughout the first chapter of Genesis (Genesis 1: 4,10,12,18,21,25,31). The text uses the Hebrew adjective *"tobh."* Leupold suggests the superlative translation *"excellent"* in this context (Leupold, p. 54). The goodness of that which God creates is the natural result of His divine nature. Anglican scholar Gordon J. Wenham argues that this inference is explicit in the Hebrew word:

*“This very common Hebrew adjective, has a broad range of meaning, as does the English term. Primarily it draws attention to an objects quality and fitness for its purpose...God is preeminently the One who is good, and His goodness is reflected in His works. God the great artist is pictured as admiring His handiwork. This account of creation is a hymn to the Creator; creation itself bears witness to the greatness and the goodness of God.”* (Wenham, p. 18)

The original perfection of creation was shattered by sin and the creation now **“awaits its liberation from the bondage of decay.”** (Romans 8:20-22). The Bible teaches that decay, not evolutionary progress, has characterized the development of the universe since man’s Fall into sin.

**“And He separated the light from the darkness.”** - The concept of separation is central to the account of creation (vs.3 - light from darkness; vs 7 - water below from water above; vs. 14 - day from night; vs. light from darkness). In this context it carries the connotation of organization. God draws order and purpose from the formlessness and emptiness that had preceded it. God did not eliminate the darkness; it too will serve His purpose (cf. Isaiah 45:7). It was not the Creator’s intention that there should be perpetual light but that the light and the darkness should operate consecutively for given periods in unchanging order. Each has a valid and proper function within the divine order of creation. The text literally indicates that God caused a functional division between the light and the darkness. The poetic language of Job 38 illustrates the point: **“What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know for you were already born! You have lived so many years!”** (Job 38:19-21) St. Paul alludes to this separation when he urges the Corinthians to separate themselves from the idolatry of their former lives: **“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?”** (2 Corinthians 6:14).

**“God called the light day and the darkness He called night.”** - In a manner consistent with the Hebrew understanding of the profound significance of names God’s action in creating is followed by naming or blessing (Genesis 1:5,8,10,22,28). *“According to the conception current in the ancient East, the name of a thing was to be identified with its essential nature.”* (Cassutto, 26) In this instance, God designates the light as **“day”** and the darkness as **“night.”** Augustine observes: *“All light is not day, nor all darkness night; but light and darkness alternating in regular*



*order constitute day and night.*” (KD, I, p.39). With these designations, God gives distinctive definitions to both day and night that they may serve their respective purposes from this time forward.

***“And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”*** - The first day of creation had seen awesome accomplishments. Time, space, and matter were created



***“And God Called the Light Day” by J. James Tissot***

by God. The vibrant power of the Holy Spirit had introduced motion and energy to the universe, the earth itself had taken shape, the Word of God had called the wonder of light into being, and light had been separated from darkness bringing about the recurrent pattern of evening and morning. The duration of the first day is specified with the terminal points of daylight (***“evening”***) and darkness (***“morning”***). The Hebrew text literally reads - *“Then came evening, then came morning - the first day.”*

Cassutto explains: *“When daytime had passed, the time allotted to darkness returned (**“and there was evening”**), and when the nighttime came to an end, the light held sway a second time (**“and there was morning”**), and this completed the first calendar day (**“the first day”**).”* (Cassutto, p. 28) By the conclusion of day one, the recurrent pattern of light and darkness which would forever characterize the passage of time on earth was already in place.

Note the meticulous manner in which Moses defines his terminology. The word day (Hebrew - *“yom”*) is used in two different senses in this verse. In the first instance it refers to what we might call *“daylight”* in contrast to night as the time of darkness (**“God called the light day...”**) In this phrase, the second time the noun is used, it refers to the twenty-four hour period which includes both daylight and darkness. Later in Genesis 2:5, the word is used more broadly to refer to the entire week of creation (**“In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.”**) In each case the text clearly identifies the intended sense of the term. Scripture must be allowed to interpret itself. We are bound to the *“bare words”* of the text, understood in their normal, literal sense, unless the Biblical text itself indicates that another meaning is intended. In this instance, all the debate about the length of the six days of creation notwithstanding, the sense of the text is unmistakably clear. The six days of creation in Genesis 1 are normal twenty-four hour days. The language of the text, in its immediate context, will allow no other interpretation. *“There can be little doubt that here “day” has its basic sense of a twenty-four hour period. The mention of morning and evening, the enumeration of the days, and the divine rest on the seventh show that a week of divine activity is being described here.”* (Wenham, p. 19) The immediate context is reinforced by the broader context of the other Biblical texts which speak of creation. For example, in explaining the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20, Moses uses the creation week as a model for observance of the seventh day as a day of rest to the Lord: **“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”** (Exodus 20:11) Dr. Henry Morris comments on the relevance of the Exodus text:

*“How could language possibly be more clear and explicit than this? Man is to work six days (“yamim”) because God worked six days. The same word is used, the same construction, everything is completely parallel. If man’s “days” are not the same as God’s*



*"God The Almighty Creator" by Hartmann Schedel - 1493*



*“The Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation”  
by Edward Burne-Jones*

*“days” then language becomes meaningless! At very best, God was then using some kind of inept pun. Remember also that this section is part of the Ten Commandments, “**tablets of stone, written with the finger of God**” (Exodus 31:18). All the Bible is divinely inspired, but this passage was divinely inscripturated! If any part of the Bible must be taken seriously, this is it! And this passage says, as plainly and emphatically as any words that could ever be devised for such a meaning, that God made the entire universe in six days. Surely this should settle the question for anyone who really believes in Biblical inerrancy.”* (Radmacher/Preus, pp. 340-341)

The pathetic attempt to accommodate Darwinian evolution by extending these days into vast indefinite periods of millions or billions of years is plainly contrary to the intended sense of the passage. Aside from

the fact that there is no possible way in which to reconcile the Darwinian scenario with the sequence of events in Genesis, the language and grammar of the text will not allow this departure from the literal sense of the term. The Hebrew word “yom” is never used in this way. Walter L. Bradley summarizes the linguistic evidence:

*The Hebrew word “yom” and its plural form “yamim” over 1,900 times in the Old Testament. In only sixty-five of these cases is it translated as a period of time other than a day in the King James Version. Outside of Genesis 1 the two hundred plus occurrences of “yom” preceded by*

*ordinals all refer to a normal twenty-four hour day. Furthermore, the seven hundred occurrences of “yamim ” always refer to a regular day.”* (Radmacher/Preus, p. 299)

Those who argue for a figurative understanding of the six days of creation often appeal to Psalm 90:4 (“***For a thousand years in Your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.***”) and 2 Peter 3:8 (“***But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day.***”) However, even these two passages which affirm the timelessness of God use the word “day” to refer to a period of twenty-four hours. Those who supplant the literal meaning of the word in the text of Genesis 1 deny the clear sense of the text itself and thereby replace the authority of the Scriptural Word of God with their own opinions or reason. We would do well to heed the pious advice of Dr. Luther:

*“Therefore I have often said, that anyone who desires to study the Holy Scriptures must see to it that he remains with the plain words wherever possible and never departs from them. Only an article of faith can compel us to conclude that the words must be understood differently than they sound. We are all the more certain that no plainer words have ever been spoken on earth than the words which God has spoken. Therefore, when Moses writes that God created heaven and earth in six days, let his words stand...If, however, you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then give the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written. And since God is speaking, it is not appropriate for you to willfully turn His Word in the direction you would like it to go.”* (SL, III, p. 21)

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*“The Archangel Michael”  
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Houston*

### *Excursus - The Creation and Fall of the Angels*

At this point in his magnificent Genesis Commentary Martin Luther notes a significant omission in the Genesis text:

*“Here Moses seems to be forgetting himself, because he does not deal at all with two very important matters, namely, the creation and the fall of the angels, and relates only the state of affairs of physical things, although there is no doubt that the angels were created....It is surprising*

*that Moses should remain silent about these weighty matters. Since men were without definite information, the result was that they invented something.”* (AE, 1, p.22)

The Reformer cites a sampling of the variety of speculation which has been advanced in reference to the creation and fall of the angels, but curtly dismisses it all: *“I, for my part, would not compel anybody to agree with such opinions.”* He urges his readers to remain with the Biblical text and to be content with the limited information which Scripture provides on these matters:

*“But this much is certain: the angels fell and the devil was transformed from an angel of light into an angel of darkness. Perhaps there may also have been a conflict between the good and the evil angels...So it is sufficient for us to know that there are good and evil angels and that God created them all alike as good. From this it follows necessarily that the evil angels fell and did not stand in the truth. How this came about is unknown; nevertheless it is likely that they fell as the result of pride, because they despised the Word or the Son of God and wanted to place themselves above Him. More than this I do not have.”* (AE, 1, p.23)

Unfortunately, Luther’s restraint has not been characteristic in the discussion of the creation and fall of the angels. The Biblical asserts that the angels are created beings, a part of the perfect environment that God fashioned for man. In the opening chapter of the letter to the Hebrews the status and role of angels is contrasted with that of the eternal Son of God *“through whom He made the universe.”* (vs.2). The Biblical writer concludes that *“He (Jesus) became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.”* (vs.4). The identity and role of the angels is summarized in these words: *“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”* (vs. 14). St. Paul specifically includes angels in the list of that which was created by God in Christ: *“He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by Him and for Him.”* (Colossians 13-16). In the Old Testament, the prophet Nehemiah acknowledges God as the Creator of all things, including the angels - the *“starry host”* of *“the highest heavens.”* *“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them. You gave life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship You.”* (Nehemiah 9:6).

Psalm 148 rejoices: ***“Praise Him all His angels, praise Him all His heavenly hosts...Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created.”*** (Psalm 148: 2,5).



***“When the Morning Stars Sang Together”  
by William Blake***

All that which the Lord God has made was created during the “*hexameron*,” that is, the six days of creation. The text of Genesis notes that ***“By the seventh day He had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”*** (Genesis 2:2-3). The Bible does not specifically define the point in time during the six days of creation in which God made the angels. The Lord alludes to the presence of the angels when the earth’s foundations first were laid in his comments to Job:

***“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell Me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone - while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*** (Job 38:4-7)

This reference would seem to indicate that the creation of the angels took place early in the creation week, perhaps on its first day - in any case by the third day, enabling the angels to witness God’s handiwork in worshipful wonder and awe.

Scripture indicates that the devil was created as a magnificent angel of light. In Ezekiel 28, the prophet sings the funeral dirge of the king of Tyre. His inspired words transcend this earthly monarch to describe the Satan presence that lurks behind





*“Satan in His Original Glory” by William Blake*

the heathen monarch who has set himself against God and His people. They provide an awesome image of Satan’s original exalted state:

***“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the Garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.”*** (Ezekiel 28:13-15)

Such was the glory from which Satan fell. Hence when the devil now masquerades as an **“angel of light”** (2 Corinthians 11:14) his pretense is but a sad parody of his original state. A similar funeral dirge, in this instance for the king of Babylon, was sung by the prophet Isaiah. Once again, glimpses of the Satanic reality behind the earthly mask can be seen. The New Testament suggests that pride was the cause of



**“The Fall of Lucifer and the Evil Angels”  
by Jean Limbourg - 1415**

depicts the massive tail of the great red dragon sweeping **“a third of the stars out of the sky.”** (Revelation 12:4). These are the fallen angels **“who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home.”** (Jude 6). Peter uses God’s judgment of these angels as a warning for sinners: **“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be**

Satan’s fall - **“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”** (1 Timothy 3:6). Isaiah confirms that view as he describes a mighty angel who presumed to be equal to God:

**“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned upon the mount of assembly, on the uttermost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”** (Isaiah 14: 12-14)

John Milton, eloquently expresses the devil’s defiant pride in his classic *Paradise Lost* as Satan declares that it is **“Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.”** (Milton, 1, 261).

Scripture further indicates that a significant number of the angelic host followed the devil in his doomed rebellion against God. The imagery of Revelation

**held for judgment...**” (2 Peter 2:4). The destructive power of these malignant spirits is presented in Revelation 9 as a massive horde of demonic warriors pouring forth from the smoky gateway of the Abyss (Revelation 9:1-21). Jesus warns that a place of eternal fire has been prepared **“for the devil and his angels.”** (Matthew 25:31).

The time of the devil’s rebellion and condemnation is not specified in Holy Writ. At the conclusion of the sixth day, God pronounced His categorical benediction on the entirety of creation - **“God saw all that He had made and it was very good.”** It is therefore clear that the downfall of the devil and his angels had not yet occurred at that time. The most that can be said is that these sad events must have occurred at some point between the creation’s completion on the sixth day and the devil’s entry into the Garden of Eden to instigate the fall of man. Further speculation is at best futile and at worst perilous. Lutheran theology has historically followed the prudent leadership of the reformer in its reluctance to speculate about such things.

*“Since Moses does not describe the creation of the angels, many curious inquires have arisen, as, for example, when were they created? But as the Scriptures do not state the precise time and day of the creation of the angels, we gladly remain in ignorance of that which we neither can nor ought to know. It is enough, therefore, for us to know (1) that the angels did not come into existence of their own accord, nor were begotten of the substance of God, but were created; (2) that the angels did not exist from eternity, nor indeed before that beginning when all things which are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, began to be. For to have been in the beginning can be said of Him alone through whom all things were made, and who is eternal (John 1:1-3).”* (Martin Chemnitz, 1, p. 165)

*“They were not created before the heavens and the earth, for these were created in the beginning, and so were the first among all created things (cf. Genesis 1:1). And besides, it is well known that the eternity of God is described as His existing before the foundation of the world (cf. Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 48:13). Moreover, they were created not after but within the six days, for after that interval God rested from the ordinary work of creation. That the angels were created before man is usually proved from Job 38:7. And some believe that we are to understand also from this passage that the angels were created upon the first day; namely because when God founded the earth then the angels are said to have praised God. But these matters are not altogether clear.”* (Schmid, p. 200)



*“The Second Day” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 1:6-8***

***And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening and there was morning - the second day.***

***“And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters...”*** God speaks for the second time as the work of creation continues through the eternal Word of God. In order for the earth to become a suitable habitat for humanity an atmosphere must be fashioned which fosters and facilitates plant and animal life. God calls into being ***“an expanse between the waters.”*** The noun ***“expanse”*** (Hebrew - ***“raqia”***) refers to a canopy. The term is derived from a root which refers to metal that is hammered or beaten until it is extremely thin and pliable (cf. Exodus 39:3 - ***“They hammered out thin sheets of gold...”*** and Job 37:18 - ***“Can you join Him in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze?”***) In this instance the reference is to a thin stretched out space, the layer of atmosphere which surrounds the earth and makes life

possible. Moses notes: ***“God called the expanse “sky.”*** Isaiah poetically describes God’s wisdom and power in creating the atmosphere to render the earth habitable for man.

***“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, or with the breadth of His hands marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on a scale and the hills on a balance?...He sits above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.”*** (Isaiah 40:12,22)

***“So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it.”*** - Once again the theme of separation is sounded. In this case it is the separation of the waters beneath the expanse from the waters above it. The text seems to indicate that at the time of creation stretched a vast canopy of water vapor around the outer edge of the earth’s atmosphere (***“the water above it”***). Dr. Henry Morris suggests that the existence of such a water canopy would have had a major impact on the physical environment, creating the ideal environment for human habitation. Its beneficent effects would have included:

*“1. The creation of a “greenhouse effect,” transmitting incoming solar radiation and reflecting and dispersing radiation from the earth’s surface, resulting in an essentially uniform temperate climate across the planet;*

*2. With nearly uniform temperatures great air mass movements would be inhibited and windstorms would be unknown;*

*3. With no global air circulation, the hydrologic cycle could not be implemented and there would be no rain except directly over the bodies of water from which it had evaporated (cf. Genesis 2:5);*

*4. With no global air circulation, and therefore no turbulence or dust particles transported to the upper atmosphere, the water vapor in the canopy would have been stable and not precipitate itself;*

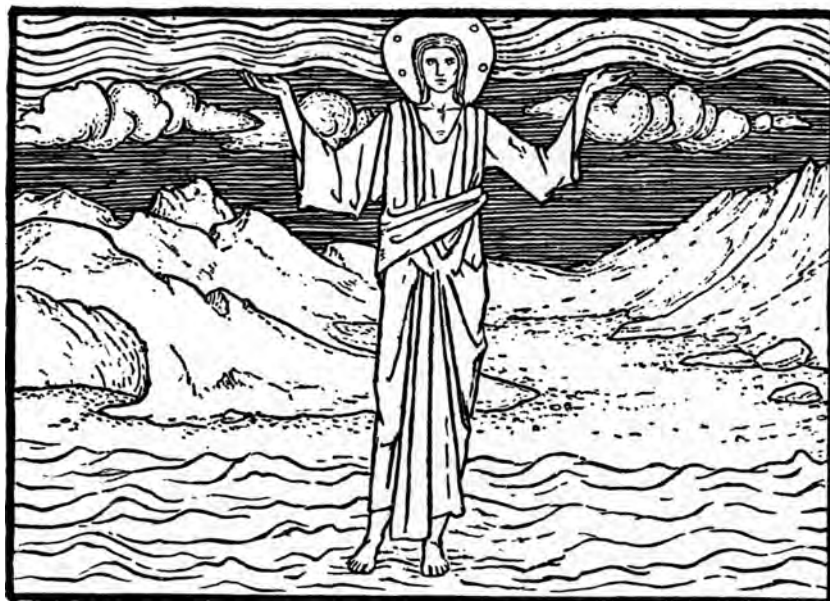
*5. The planet would have maintained a comfortable uniform humidity by means of daily local evaporation and condensation (like dew or ground fog) in each day/night cycle;*

6. *The combination of warm temperature and adequate moisture everywhere would be conducive later to extensive stands of lush vegetation all over the world with no barren deserts or frozen ice caps;*

7. *Ultra-violet radiation, cosmic rays, and other destructive energy from space would be filtered out by the vapor canopy significantly contributing to human and animal health and longevity;*

8. *The weight of the water vapor on the outer edge of the atmosphere would significantly increase atmospheric pressure contributing still further to health and longevity;*

9. *Later, when needed, these upper waters would provide the reservoir from which God would send the great flood to save the godly remnant from the hopelessly corrupt population of the world.* (Morris, p. 60)



*“The Second Day of Creation” by Edward Burne-Jones*

**“And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.”** - This chronological formula appears seven times throughout the chapter. The use of the ordinal number indicates that each of the seven days of the creation week was the same as those which preceded it, as one follows the other in sequence. As previously noted, this linguistic pattern precludes the possibility that these days were vast periods of millions or billions of years - the time scope demanded by Darwinian evolution.



*“The Third Day” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 1:9-13***

***And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters He called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the third day.***

***“And God said, “Let the water under the sky...”*** - The earth, at this point, remains an undifferentiated fluid mass, liquid and solid permeating one another. The Creator now proceeds with His work of separation, intended to bring order and constructive design to the chaos of the original creation of matter. The water and the dry land of planet earth are separated from one another. By divine command ***“the water under the sky”*** is ***“gathered to one place.”*** This phrase does not merely refer to one particular body of water, a huge primeval ocean, but expresses the separation of the water from the land. Prior to this divine initiative, the waters had occupied every

place, permeating all things. They are now drawn out to exist separately. St. John of Damascus notes:

*“Now, the fact that Scripture speaks of one gathering does not mean that they were gathered together in one place, for notice that after this it says, “And the gathering together of the waters He called seas.” Actually, the account meant that the waters were segregated by themselves apart from the earth. And so the waters were brought together in their gathering places and the dry land appeared.” (Louth, p. 12)*

The **“gathered waters”** are called **“seas.”** Note the plural form of the noun (Hebrew - *“yammim”*). This designation includes every body of water on the face of the earth - oceans and seas, inland lakes, ponds, and rivers. This incredible series of events is a favorite topic for the poetic writers of the Old Testament.

*“Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, “This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waters halt.” (Job 38:8-10)*

*“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at Your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of Your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the places You assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth. He makes the springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains.” (Psalm 104:5-9)*

*“I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so that the waters would not overstep His command, and He marked out the foundations of the earth.” (Proverbs 8:27-28)*

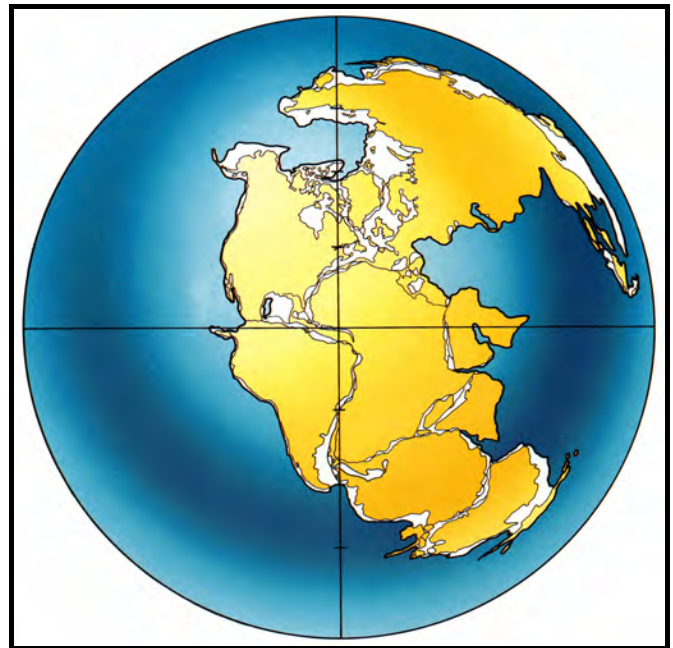
*“Should you not fear Me?” declares the Lord. “Should you not*



***tremble in My presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it.*** (Jeremiah 5:22)

***“Let the dry ground appear.”*** - The reality behind the brief words of this simple phrase staggers the imagination. Here is the origin of the great land mass of the earth in its might and majesty. Early in the twentieth century, a German meteorologist named Alfred Wegener proposed what has come to be known as the theory of *“continental drift.”* Wegener argued that the seven continents of today’s world originally formed one great land mass,

which he named *“Pangea”* (Greek - *“all earth”*) surrounded by a single world sea which he named *“Panthallassa”* (Greek - *“all sea”*). Wegener’s thesis was strongly supported by the obvious geographic fit of the outlines of the present continents. This conformity is even closer when the currently submerged continental shelves are taken into account. A recent computer study by Sir Edward Bullard, J. E. Everett and A. G. Smith of the University of Cambridge demonstrated a mismatch of no more than one degree when North and South America were aligned with Africa and Eurasia. The modern science of *“plate tectonics”* explains the fragmentation of the continents in terms of the movement within the earth’s crust. The outer shell or crust of the earth is made up of seven huge slabs with twenty smaller plates squeezed in-between them. These plates are constantly in motion, floating, as it were, on the molten core of the planet. The point at which two of these plates meet is called a *“fault.”* These fault lines are characterized by geologic instability - earthquakes and volcanic activity. Another hypothesis which seeks to explain the phenomenon of continental drift is called the hydroplate theory. According to this view, the division of the original land mass was the result of the eruption of massive subterranean water deposits, ***“the springs of the great deep”***. (Genesis 7:11) It may well be that a combination of these factors during the cataclysmic events of the Flood resulted in the present distribution of the continents. The Bible’s description of the separation of the land and the sea, written

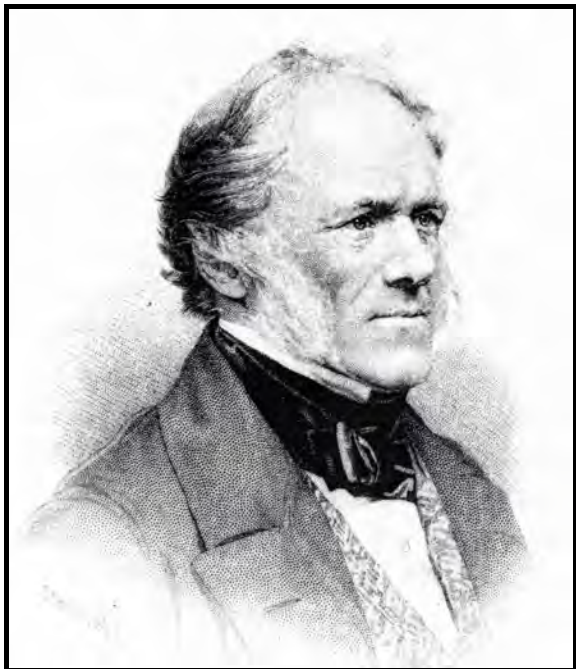


***“Pangea - the Original Land Mass”***

millennia before the development of these scientific theories, clearly anticipated that which modern science has only now rediscovered. Restricted by their dogmatic refusal to acknowledge the existence of a transcendent Creator, scientists are compelled to allow hundreds of millions of years for these processes to occur. The Biblical explanation of a God who created all things and subsequently sent a world-wide flood to purge a humanity hopelessly corrupted by sin offers a much more reasonable explanation of the physical evidence. One commentator describes the profound geologic implications of these words in this way:

*“Tremendous chemical reactions got under way, as dissolved elements precipitated and combined with others to form the vast complex of minerals and rocks making up the solid earth - its crust, its mantle, and its core. The materials so formed tended in general (though with many localized exceptions due to the complex and cataclysmic energies operating) to arrange themselves isostatically with heavier materials sinking and lighter materials floating, and with many substances still in suspension or solution. Great earth movements got under way in response to differential heating and other forces.”* (Morris, p. 61)

By the almighty power of God within a matter of a few hours the great land mass took shape and our earth came into being. Again, modern science with its arrogant dismissal



*Charles Lyell*

of the possibility of an omnipotent Creator, and its unverifiable assumption that the natural processes which we observe today must always have been the case, requires millions and billions of years for these events to occur by random chance. Current geologic theory indicates that the earth is 4.6 billion years old. But the Bible teaches that that is not the way it happened - **“And God said, *Let the dry land appear...and it was so.*”** *“But the ninth verse surely teaches that what we call geologic formations took place in titanic and gigantic measure at a vastly accelerated pace in a truly miraculous creative work as astounding as the rest.”* (Leupold, p.61)

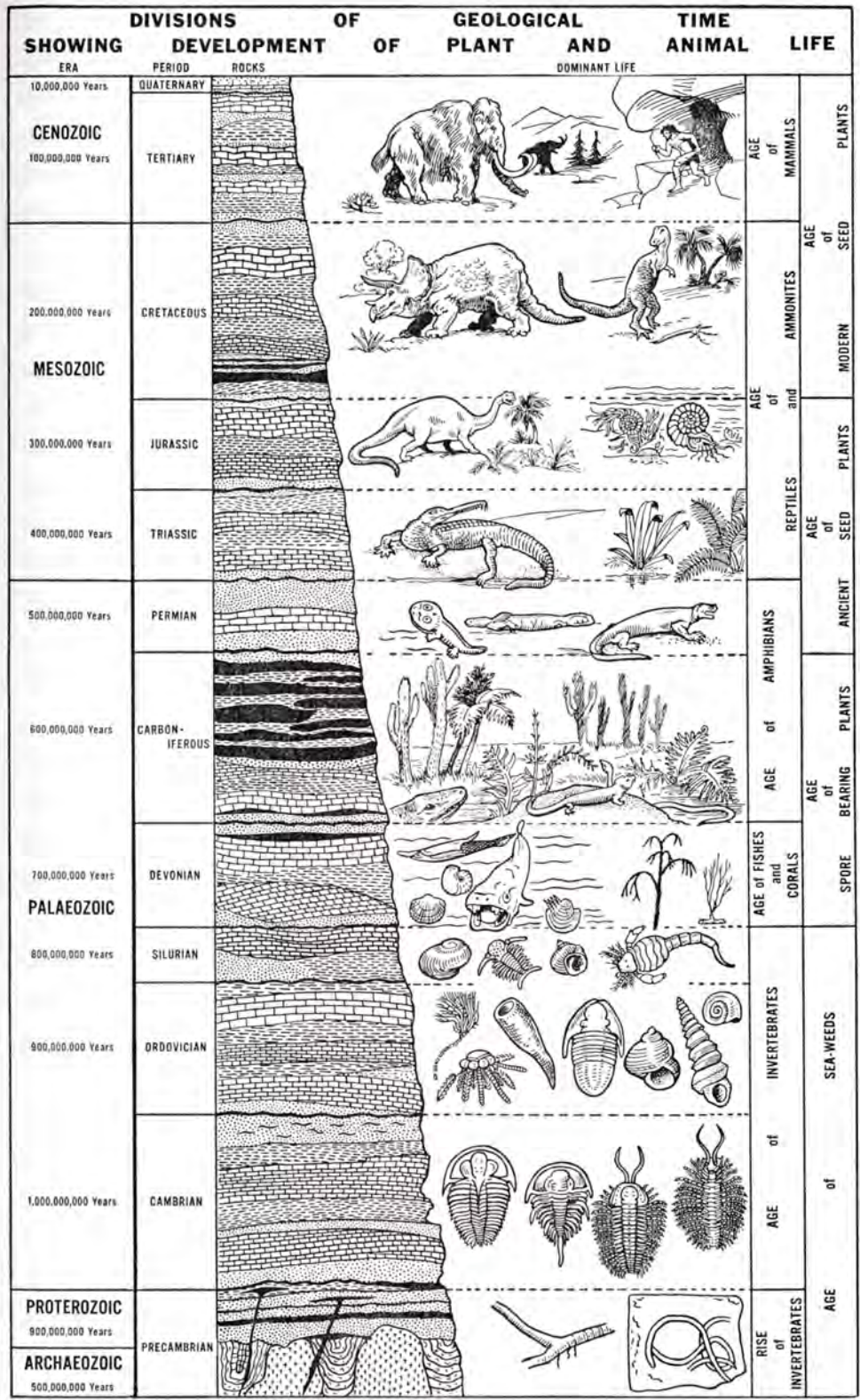
Modern geology’s fundamental article of faith

is the doctrine of “*uniformitarianism*.” First articulated by British geologist Charles Lyell early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, uniformitarianism replaced the “*catastrophism*,” the view which had prevailed within the scientific community prior to that time. It has become core conviction upon which geology’s entire world view is based. Uniformitarianism is often summarized by James Hutton’s dictum, “*The present is the key to the past*.” According to this view the universe is a closed system that operates on the basis of natural patterns of cause and effect. These patterns have never been altered and cannot be altered. Supernatural intervention in this system cannot occur. This conviction is often called “*naturalism*.” According to naturalism there can be nothing beyond nature and its laws. That is a religious belief; not a scientific conclusion. *Earth and Life through Time*, a current college level geology text, defines uniformitarianism and acknowledges the crucial role that this “*belief*” plays in the practice of modern geology:

*“Fundamental to the modern science of geology is the principle of uniformitarianism, which is the belief that there are inviolable laws of nature that have not changed in the course of time. Of course, uniformitarianism applies not only to geology but to all scientific disciplines...but geologists hold the principle of uniformitarianism in particularly great esteem, because, as we shall see, it was the widespread of uniformitarianism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that signaled the beginning of the modern science of geology. The principle of uniformitarianism governs geology’s interpretations of even the most ancient rocks on earth.”* (Stanley, pp.1-2)

This core conviction is unverified and unverifiable thereby removing it from the realm of science and transferring it to the realm of religious faith. The Bible explicitly rejects this view as Peter warns his readers that in the last days scoffers will come who will declare: “***Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.***” (2 Peter 3:4)

Geology further indulges in the faith assumption that organic evolution is a fact and concludes on the basis of that assumption that the geologic ages of rock strata may be reliably determined by the index fossils within those rocks. The result of the combination of these two faith assumptions is the formation of the famous geologic column according to which the history of our planet is measured. The rocks are dated by the fossils they contain, and the fossils are dated by the rock strata in which they



*"The Geologic Column"*

occur. That is a classic example of a circular argument. Each component of the argument is proven by the other and therefore nothing is actually proven. R.H. Rastall admits as much in his article on geology in the Encyclopedia Britannica:

*“It cannot be denied that from a strictly philosophical standpoint geologists are arguing in a circle. The succession of organisms has been determined by a study of their remains embedded in the rocks, and the relative ages of the rocks are determined by the remains of the organisms that they contain.”* (Brown, p. 64)

In fact, the geologic column does not exist anywhere on the face of the earth. If all of its eleven periods were to be superimposed on one another in the same place the column would be over 100 miles high! Layered sedimentary rock has never been found anywhere which exceeded 15 miles in depth and the earth’s crust itself is no more than 30 miles thick. In most instances where sedimentary rock strata are found, they include three or less layers. The most complete representation of the column anywhere on earth is the Grand Canyon. But even there eight of the eleven layers, representing over 345,000,000 years, are missing. In over 500 instances across the face of the globe, the sedimentary layers contained in actual physical evidence contradict the textbook model. (Baker, p. 113) The geologic column has been reproduced in science texts for generations as if it were established fact. In reality it is a figment of evolutionary imagination - a composite developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of evolutionary assumptions and presuppositions.

***“And God called the dry ground land and the gathered waters He called seas. And God saw that it was good.”*** - This is the final instance in which God exercises His prerogative in naming that which He has made. From this point forward, that responsibility will be delegated to man as part of the dominion over the earth which is entrusted to him by God. Once again, that which God has made is declared to be

***“good”*** - that is, suitable for its intended purpose, the creation of the ideal environment for humanity. In this context it is helpful to recognize that the great flood which God will later send upon the earth was essentially a reversal of the goodness which God accomplished on the third day of creation. Man’s evil inclinations and sinful rebelliousness came to defy and deny that goodness and the waters which God had separated from the land became the instrument of His judgment overwhelming the land and destroying all life upon the earth. *“In the flood, the bounds established in creation were overstepped, and death and chaos returned.”* (Wenham, p. 20) This

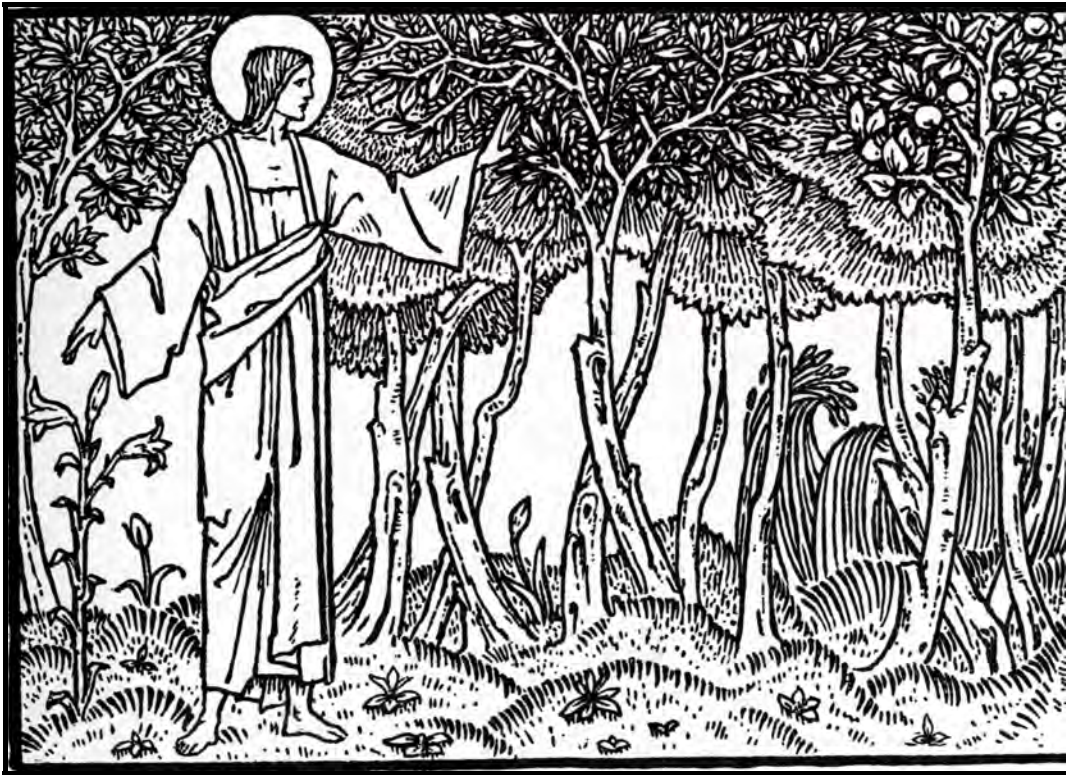
is precisely the point of 2 Peter 3:3-7.

***“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say: “Where is this coming He promised? Ever since our father died, everything goes on since it has since the beginning of creation.” But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word the heaven’s existed and the earth was formed out of water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same Word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”***

***“Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation:...”*** - These brief words describe the awesome moment of “*biogenesis*,” the origin of life. First plant life, and later on the fifth and sixth creation days the various forms of animal life, come into being in response to the life-giving Word of God. The Bible declares that the living God is the Source and Giver of Life. Evolution is forced to assert the implausible “*spontaneous generation of life*” from non-living matter in contradiction to the most basic principle of biology, the “*Law of Biogenesis*.” Eminent British scientist, Sir Peter Mendawar, defines the Law of Biogenesis and describes its role in biological science in these words:

*“In its affirmative form the Law of Biogenesis states that all living organisms are the progeny of living organisms that went before them. The familiar Latin tag is “omne vivum ex vivo” - All that is alive came from something living; in other words, every organism has an unbroken genealogical pedigree extending back to the first living things. In its negative form, the law can be taken to deny the occurrence (or even the possibility) of spontaneous generation. Moreover, the progeny of mice are mice, and men, men - “homogenesis,” or like begetting like. The Law of Biogenesis is arguably the most fundamental in biology.”* (Bird, I, pp.311-312)

Noble Prize winner Dr. George Wald, formerly of Harvard University, candidly admits the dilemma with which this contradiction of the Law of Biogenesis confronts his fellow evolutionists:

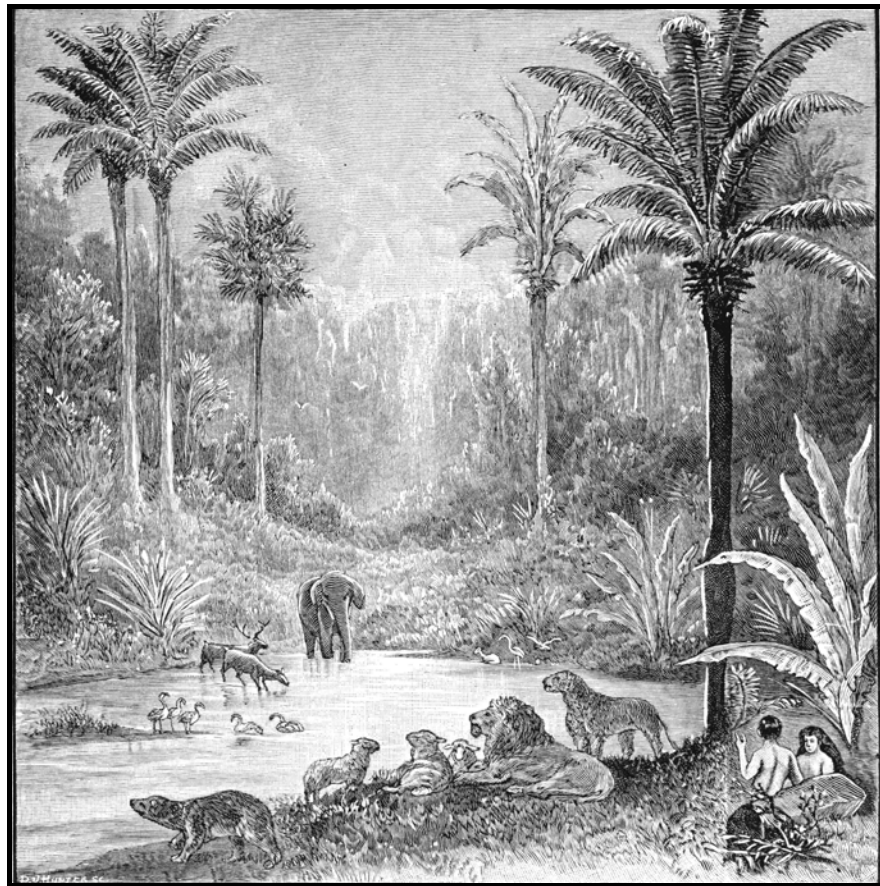


*“Let the land produce vegetation” by Edward Burne-Jones*

*“The reasonable view was to believe in spontaneous generation, the only alternative to believe in a single, primary act of supernatural creation. There is not third position. One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. Yet, here we are - as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation.” (Brown, p. 37)*

Creation scientist, Dr. Duane T. Gish observes that Darwinian evolution is, in fact, a religion - a system of unverifiable beliefs which *“requires its followers to deny the necessity of God at the cost of their scientific integrity. It is actually pseudo-science, or false science.”* (Gish, p. 30)

The creation of plant life follows immediately upon the creation of the dry land. This indicates that the kind of fertile soil necessary for the support of vegetation, which would naturally require a long time to produce, was created *“ready-made”* by God in anticipation of the imminent arrival of plants and trees. This is but one of many instances in which that which God creates instantaneously has, at the moment of its creation, the *“appearance of age.”* When the stones in the river beds and the sand on the shores of the sea were fashioned by the almighty hand of the Creator they bore



*“The Garden of Eden” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration*

the appearance of millennia of erosion so that they might carry out the purpose for which they were intended. *“Not only had rocks and minerals been formed, but so had a blanket of fertile soil - sand, silt, and clay sized particles in an ideally graded mixture.”* (Morris, p. 62)

***“Vegetation: seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.”*** - The NIV’s translation of the phrase suggests the general term ***“vegetation”*** followed by two specific categories ***“seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it.”*** The Hebrew text is more accurately translated as three basic categories - ***“grasses, seed bearing plants, and trees...”*** The language includes all forms of plant life from the most simple grasses to the huge trees of the forest. Note once again that the plant life which God creates is fully developed. St. Ephraem of Syria correctly points out:

*“Although the grasses were only a moment old at their creation, they appeared as if they were months old. Likewise, the trees, although only a day old when they sprouted forth were like trees years old as they were*



*fully grown and fruits were already budding on their branches. The grass that would be required as food for the animals which were to be created two days later was thus made ready. And the new corn that would be food for Adam and his descendants who would be thrown out of paradise four days later was thus prepared.” (Louth, p. 15)*

God does not merely sow seeds. He creates mature plants. Everything from tiny violets to towering sequoia trees appeared on the earth that day. Thus, once again, the plants that were created had the “*appearance of age.*” If we had walked through the beautiful forests of the new earth that day it would have been hard to believe that they were only a few hours old. The entire universe was made as a functioning entity, complete and fully developed from the very beginning. Any attempt to calculate the age of the earth without taking this factor into account is doomed to failure. The text emphasizes the reproductive capability of the plant life God created. In these three verses, forms of the word “*seed*” are used ten times in the Hebrew text. God endows plant, and later animal life, with the ability to regenerate itself.



***“according to their various kinds.”***

- This phrase occurs ten times in the first chapter of Genesis to indicate the limitations that God placed upon patterns of plant and animal reproduction. Modern research into the complexities of the DNA molecule and the genetic code it contains only serves to reinforce the Biblical teaching of the stability of the kinds (Hebrew - “*min*”). The word “*min*” occurs thirty-one times in the Old Testament. Thirty of those occurrences are in the five books of Moses. The other is in

Ezekiel 47:10. The term is drawn from a root which means “*to split*” or “*to divide.*” The Biblical usage of the term suggests a division or grouping to which plant or animal life forms belong by order of the divine Creator. Modern science categorizes life forms within a seven level system of classification. This system originated with the Swedish biologist Carolous Linnaeus. Using these basic categories, for example, the tiger would be classified as follows:



*“The Tiger” by Charles R. Knight*

***PANTHERA TIGRIS***

**KINGDOM - ANIMALIA**

(A Kingdom is an overall division containing organisms that work in fundamentally similar ways. The kingdom Animalia contains multicellular organisms that obtain energy by eating food. Most have nerves and muscles and are mobile.)

**PHYLUM - CHORDATA**

(The phylum Chordata contains animals with a strengthening rod or notochord, running the length of their bodies for all or part of their lives.)

## CLASS - MAMMALIA

(The class Mammalia contains chordates that are warm-blooded, have hair, and suckle their young. The majority of them give birth to live young.)

## ORDER - CARNIVORA

(The order Carnivora contains mammals that have teeth specialized for biting and shearing. Many of them live primarily on meat.)

## FAMILY - FELIDAE

(The family Felidae contains carnivores with short skulls and well developed claws. In most cases, the claws are retractable.)

## GENUS - PANTHERA

(The genus Panthera contains large cats that have a specialized larynx with elastic ligaments. Unlike other cats they can roar as well as purr.)

## SPECIES - PANTHERA TIGRIS

(A species is a group of similar individuals that are able to interbreed in the wild. The tiger is the only member of the genus Panthera that has a striped coat when adult. There are several varieties or sub-species.)



*“Lions Stalking Their Prey” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving*



*19<sup>th</sup> Century Cartoon of Charles Darwin and His Ancestral Ape*

The overall correlation of the Hebrew word “*min*” to a particular category in modern scientific taxonomy cannot be substantiated. This is true, in the first instance, because of the ambiguity of these categories among the scientists themselves. There are as many different definitions of the term “*species*,” for instance, as there are biologists. Columbia University biologist T. Dozahnsky acknowledged this difficulty when he offered this circular definition of the category: “*A species is whatever a competent systematist considers to be a species.*” (Klotz, p. 48). At the same time, the Bible appears to use the word “*min*” in a variety of ways. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* summarizes the usage of the term: “*God created the basic forms of life called “min” which can be classified according to modern biologists and zoologists as sometimes species, sometimes genus, sometimes family or order.*” (TDOT,I, pp. 503-504). Dr. Henry Morris offers a similar assessment of the term:

*“Whatever precisely is meant by the term “kind” (Hebrew “min”), it does indicate the limitations of variation...The “min” often is identical with the “species” sometimes with the “genus,” and possibly once in a while with the “family.”* (Morris, p. 63) The focus here in Genesis 1, where the term occurs ten times, appears to be on reproduction and fertile interbreeding. The point of the text is that “*Jehovah made plants and animals according to their various divisions. It means that these are definite limits beyond which plants and animals may not vary.*” (Surburg, p. 67) Darwinian evolution postulates the progressive development of not only one species from another, but also development across every classification level all the way up to and including that of kingdom - since all plant and animal life are said to have evolved from the same original organisms. Such nonsense is not only clearly contrary to Scripture, it also defies reason, common sense, and the entirety of the empirical evidence.

Widespread variation within a species is certainly possible - i.e. Great Danes to Chihuahuas - and selective interbreeding within a species can produce new varieties with certain desired characteristics. Such intra-species development is often called “*micro-evolution.*” It is evident both in nature and in response to human intervention and cultivation. “*There is a tremendous amount of variational potential within each kind, facilitating the generation of distinct individuals and even of many varieties within the kind, but nevertheless, precluding the evolution of new kinds. A great deal of horizontal variation is easily possible, but no vertical changes.*” (Morris, p. 63) On the other hand, the evidence for “*macro-evolution,*” the progressive development of new entirely different life forms across all of the various classifications of life forms, simply does not exist. Charles Darwin himself admitted as much when he lamented: “*There are two or three million species on earth, sufficient field, one might think for observation. But it must be said today that in spite of all the efforts of*

*trained observers not one change of a species into another is on record.*” (Sippert, p. 204) More recently, in a 1985 Brief presented to the US Supreme Court, Dr. Dean H. Kenyon, Professor of Biology at San Francisco State University acknowledged: “*The complete transmutation of even one animal species into a different species has never been directly observed either in the laboratory or in the field.*” (Brown, p.42). If the basic premise of Darwinian evolution is to be accepted at all, it must be accepted on blind faith. There simply is no evidence to support it.



***“And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And***

***God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the third day.*”** - The perfect accomplishment of all that which God commanded is reported using the typical formulas which prevail throughout the creation account. The efficacy of the divine Word is absolute. God speaks and it is done - without exception or omission. By the conclusion of the third creation day the land mass of the earth is verdant and green covered with a profusion of abundant plant life.



*“The Fourth Day” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 1:14-19***

***And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.***

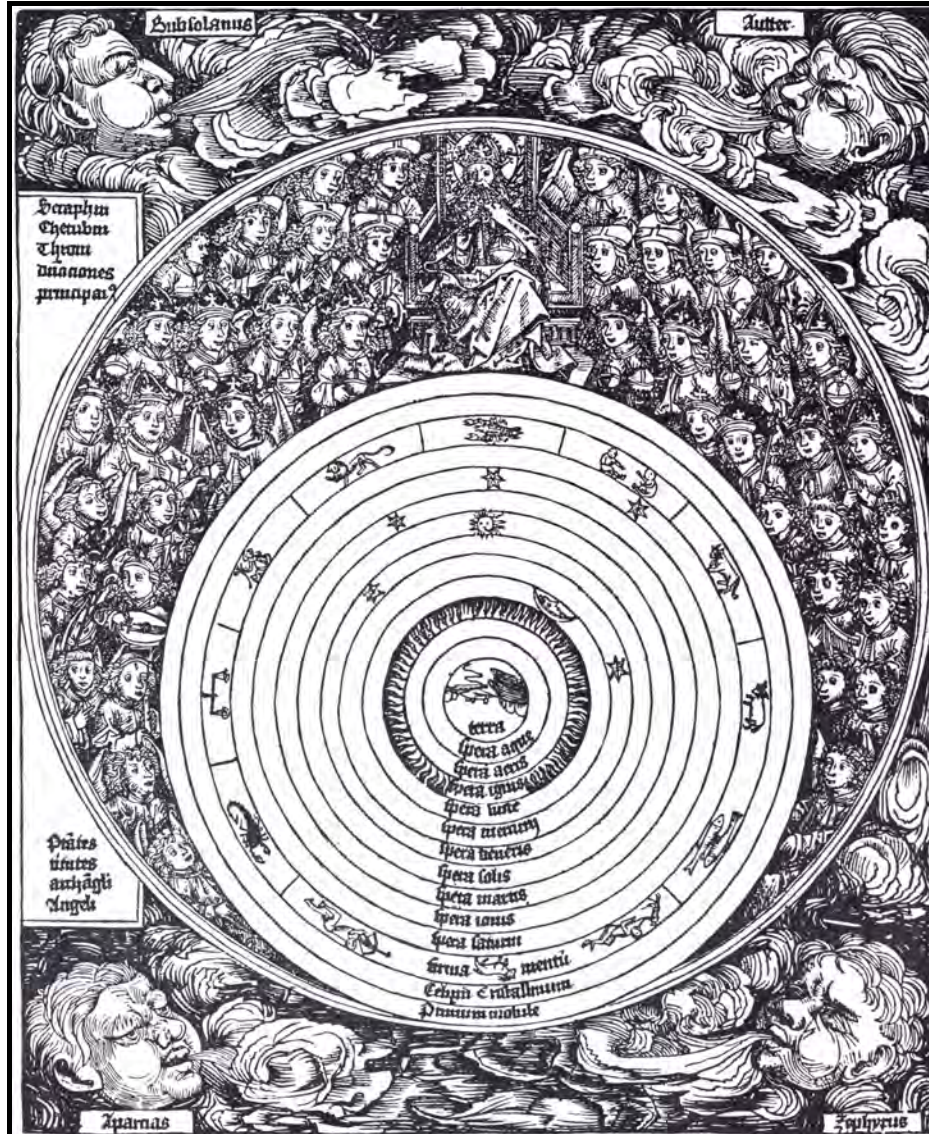
***“And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky...”*** - The creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars is described in greater length than anything other than the creation of man himself. This is evidently a subject of great importance. And yet the sun and the moon are not specifically named in the account, but rather referred to in general as ***“two great lights - the greater light...and the lesser light.”*** The Hebrew words for the sun and the moon are *“semes”* and *“yareah.”* These nouns are closely related to the Semitic names for the gods of the sun (*“Shamash”*) and the moon (*“Yarih”*). Their presence here would sound a clearly discordant note. The worship

of the sun and moon played a prominent role in the mythology of nearly all of Israel's pagan neighbors. Astrology, the belief that the movement of the stars controlled human life and action was also quite widespread, particularly in Mesopotamia. The desire to make it abundantly clear that the celestial bodies are not gods or goddesses but were created by God to serve His purposes may explain the delay of their creation until the fourth day and the failure of the text to refer to them by name. Both serve to downplay the significance of these ***“lights in the expanse of the sky.”*** *“The Torah, on the contrary, depicts them as material entities, created by the word of the one God, and wholly devoid of personality, mind, or will.”* (Cassutto, p. 43) St. Ambrose sounds this theme in his fourth century commentary on the Hexameron:

*“Look first on the firmament of heaven, which was made before the sun. Look first upon the earth which was made to be visible and was already formed before the sun put in its appearance. Look at the plants of the earth, which preceded in time the light of the sun. The blade of grass is older than the moon. Therefore, do not believe that object to be a god to which the gifts of God are seen to be preferred. Three days have passed. No one, meanwhile, has looked for the sun, yet the brilliance of light has been in evidence everywhere. For the day too has its light, which is itself the precursor of the sun.”* (Louth, p. 17)

God commands the existence of ***“lights in the expanse of the sky.”*** The Hebrew noun in this phrase is *“maor”* which literally means *“places of light.”* In this context it might best be translated as *“light-bearers”* or *“lamps.”* Outside of Genesis 1, this word is typically used in the Pentateuch to describe the sanctuary lamps of the tabernacle (cf. also Psalm 74:16; Ezekiel 32:8). The term is distinct from the Hebrew word *“or”* ***“light”***) which occurs in vs. 3,4,5,18. Light is not inherent in these heavenly bodies. They are lamps which have been lighted by the power of the Creator. By their burning (sun and stars) or their reflection (moon) they are the means which God has chosen to give His gift of light (which pre-existed them) to the earth. This account is truly unique among the sacred writings of the ancient Near East. Claus Westermann asserts: *“The utter creatureliness of the heavenly bodies has never before been expressed in such revolutionary terms.”* (Westermann, p. 44)

These light bearers are placed by God ***“in the expanse of the sky.”*** The Hebrew noun *“shamayim,”* here translated ***“sky,”*** might better be translated in this context with the more general traditional term *“heavens.”* Like its English counterpart, this Hebrew word can be used in any one of three ways - to refer the earth's atmosphere,



*“The Creation of the Heavens and the Nine Ranks of Angels”  
15<sup>th</sup> Century Woodcut by Hartmann Schedel*

to the vast reaches of space, or to the dwelling place of God. This usage is reflected in St. Paul’s reference to God’s dwelling place as *“the third heaven”* in 2 Corinthians 12:2. In this context, the reference is obviously to what we characteristically refer to today as outer space.

Genesis 1:1 had described the creation from nothing of the basic components of the entire universe - time, space, and matter. That original *“creatio ex nihilo”* specifically included both *“the heavens and the earth.”* Thus, all of the raw material from which the countless galaxies of stars and planets were to be fashioned had already been



created on the first day. That work is now brought to its completion. Leupold's description provides a fair summary of the process:

*“The earth is created in the rough, subject to certain deficiencies or incompletenesses which are removed one by one through the following days; similarly, the heavens are created in the rough, heavenly bodies in vast spaces, not yet functioning as they shall later. What still remains to be done in and with them is now completed on the fourth day.”*  
(Leupold, p. 71)

The magnitude and the complexity of the universe which God fashioned exceeds the capacity of the human imagination. Astronomers currently estimate that the universe may include as many as one hundred billion galaxies. Each galaxy is thought to contain nearly one hundred billion stars. Our own star, the sun, is part of the Milky Way Galaxy. The total number of stars in the universe is calculated at ten million billion billion (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). The nearest star to our solar system, the constellation Alpha Centauri, is thirty trillion miles away from earth. Within these incomprehensible numbers there is incredible complexity and order. Each galaxy and all the stars within it move through the heavens in precise predictable patterns. The Psalmist declares: ***“He determines the number of the stars and calls each of them by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power.”*** (Psalm 147:4) The prophet Isaiah cites the creation and ordering of the heavens as proof positive of the almighty power of God: ***“Lift your eyes and look to the heavens; Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing.”*** (Isaiah 40:26)

Our own solar system consists of the sun, nine planets, at least sixty-three moons revolving around those planets, along with assorted asteroids and comets. The sun is 866,000 miles in diameter - compared to the earth which is 8,000 miles in diameter. It weighs 1,000 times as much as all of the nine planets combined. The surface temperature of the sun is 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit. And yet, in comparison to other stars our sun is only small to medium sized. Astronomers refer to the stars in this size category as *“yellow dwarfs.”* The largest category, called *“super giants”* are as much as 1,000 times larger than our sun. One such star that has been documented by astronomers is the pulsating sun *“Betelgeuse.”* It is at least 600 times bigger than the sun. The sun's gravitational pull maintains the precise orbit of each of the planets around it. The earth is the third planet in the solar system. It is 93,000,000 miles

Ymagines coeli Septentrionales cum duodecim imaginibus zodiaci.



"The Constellations of the Northern Hemisphere"  
1515 Woodcut by Albrecht Dürer

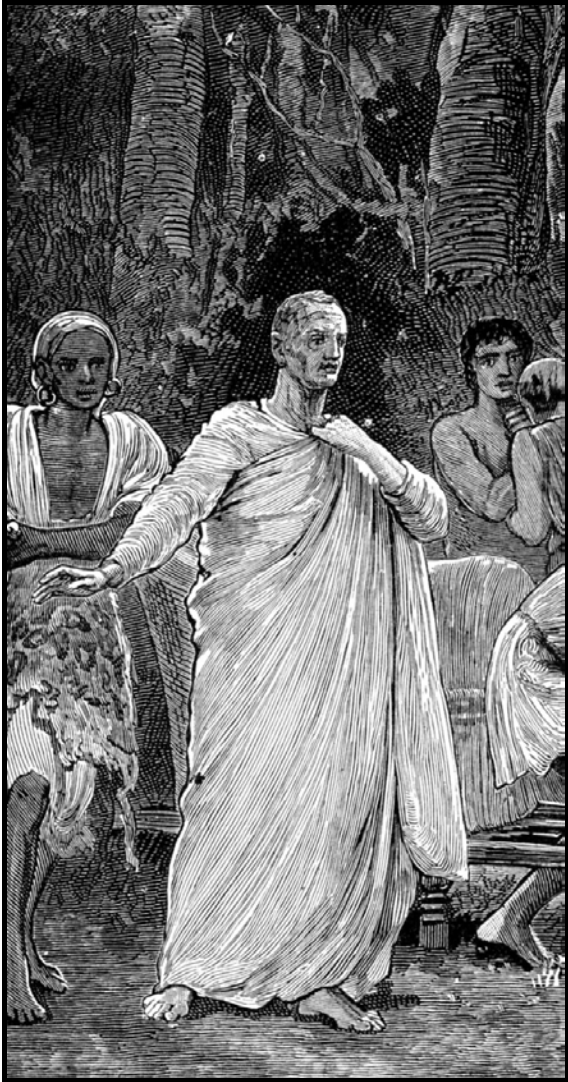
away from the sun. Increase that distance to 120,000,000 miles and the earth would be perpetually frozen, unable to sustain life. Decrease that distance to 60,000,000 miles and the surface of the earth would be a glowing furnace of perpetual fire. Our planet is exactly where it must be to provide the balanced heat and life which sustains the profusion of plant and animal life. The earth is tilted 23.5 degrees on its axis. That angle is exactly what it must be to evenly distribute the rotation of the seasons in both hemispheres. And still we must recall that all of the vast immensity of space with its myriads of stars and planets, were created by God as part of the perfect environment for man. Dr. Alfred Rehwinkel, the noted Lutheran theologian and scientist, summarizes the wonder of it all with these well chosen words:

*“Our earth is only a satellite of the sun, a mere speck in the infinite universe, compared with the millions and billions of other heavenly bodies. And yet God chose this little speck as the place in which He would make Himself known to rational beings outside His heavenly abode. Here, on this speck, He created life and all the requirements to maintain life. On this little planet He placed man, the crown of all creation. Here He revealed Himself through Moses and the prophets. And above all, here on this planet, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus by whom all things were made (John 1:1), became man, to reunite the human race from their Creator from Whom they had become estranged through their rebellion. And to this little speck in the universe God, the Creator and Judge of all the world, will return on the Day of Judgment to terminate the history of this present universe and create a new heaven and a new earth which will abide forever. And so it is true that our earth is, after all, the real center of the universe, and all the other heavenly bodies, great and small, were created to serve this little planet.”*  
(Rehwinkel, p. 141)

We cannot help but join the Psalmist in his humble prayer of adoration and praise:

***“The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of His hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.  
There is no speech or language where their speech is not heard.  
Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens, He has pitched a tent for the sun,  
which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,***

*like a champion rejoicing to run his course.  
It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is hidden from its heat.” (Psalm 19:1-6)*



*“Marcus Cicero” 19<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving*

The implications of the existence of the universe in its magnitude and complexity were obvious even to the Roman philosopher/statesman Cicero. In his Essay *“Concerning the Nature of the Gods,”* this pagan, who lived before the time of Christ and had never encountered God’s own account of the origin of the universe in the Book of Genesis concluded:

*“The most potent cause of the belief was the uniform motion and ordered beauty of the heavens, and the varied groupings and ordered beauty of the sun, the moon, and the stars - the things that are not the mere effect of chance...With the vast movements and phases of the heavenly bodies and masses of matter, which throughout the countless ages of the past have never in the smallest degree played false, he is compelled to infer that these mighty world motions are compelled by some mind...Now the heavenly bodies and all those things that display some regularity cannot be created by man; therefore that which creates them is superior to man; yet what better name is there for this than “god”?” (Cicero, p. 137ff.)*

Those proud moderns who imagine the origin of the universe as the random result of a far distant cosmic “big bang” would do well to ponder the wisdom of this ancient thinker:

*“Can any sane person believe that all this array of stars and the vast celestial adornment could have been created out of atoms rushing to and fro fortuitously and at random? Could any other being, devoid of*

*intelligence and reason have created them?” (Cicero, p.233)*

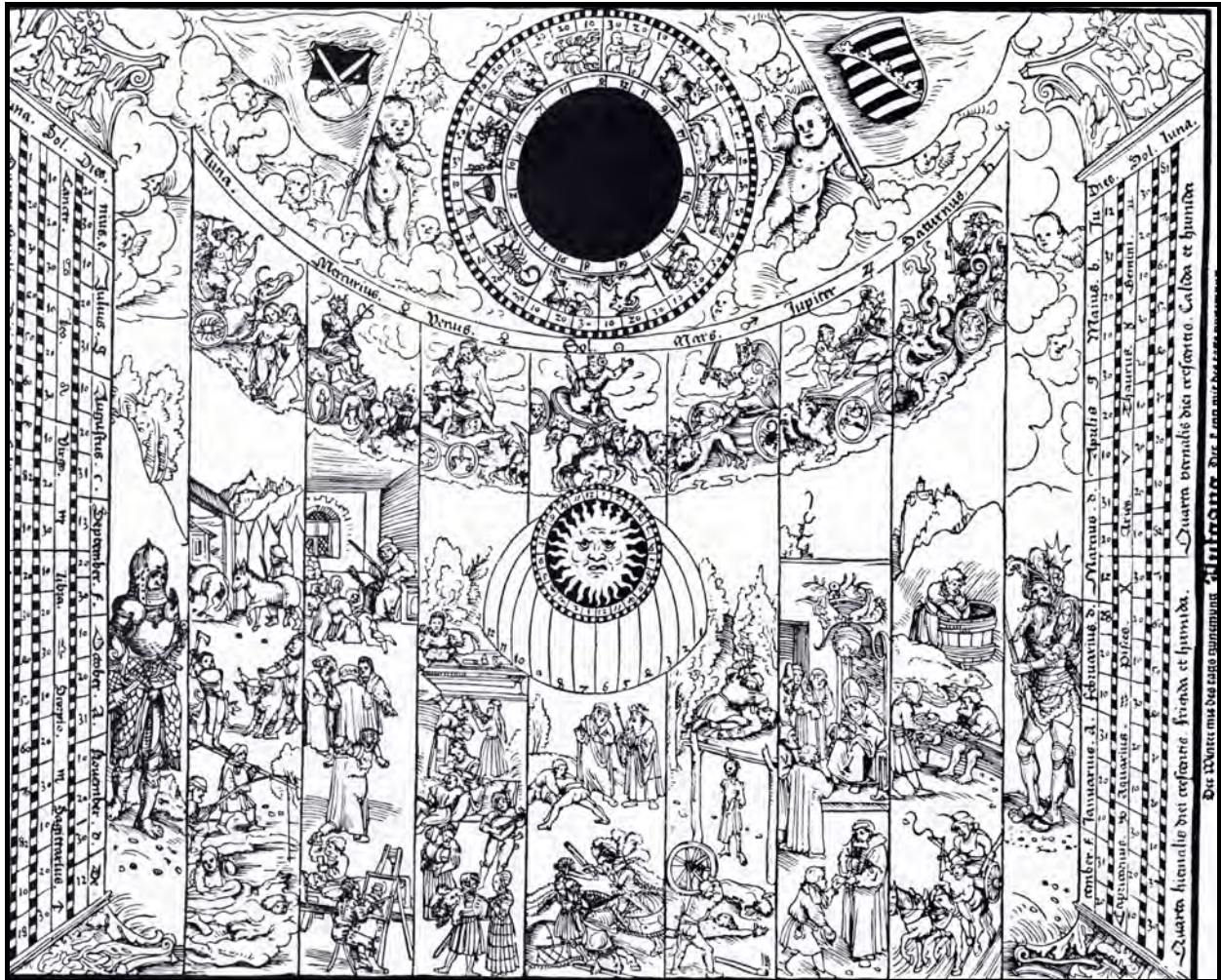
***“To separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.”*** - The light-bearers fashioned on this day are designed by God to serve these three purposes. First, ***“to separate the day from the night.”*** This expression helps us to understand the existence of the first three days when there was, as yet, no sun. The creation of the sun does not bring day and night into being. They existed before the sun. To separate one thing from another means to mark the distinction between two things already in existence. The light which God had created on the first day was independent of the sun and yet functioned in much the same way as the sun does now. Cassutto explains the sense of the text:

*“This then is the meaning of the verse: that just as at the beginning and at the end of every day there is light without sun, so throughout those first three days God caused light to shine upon the earth from some other source without recourse to the sun; but when He created the luminaries, He handed over to them the task of separation, that is, He commanded that one should serve by day and the others at night, and thus they would all become signs for distinguishing the two periods of time.” (Cassutto, p. 44)*

The second divine intention for the light-bearers is to serve as ***“signs that mark seasons and days and years.”*** The rising and setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the movement of the constellations across the night sky - these are the signs, the outward, visible indications, of the passage of time as days, seasons, and years come and go. The word ***“signs”*** is to be construed in the broadest possible sense in this context. John MacArthur summarizes the crucial significance of the heavenly bodies' function as ***“signs that mark seasons and days and years”*** within the ongoing pattern of human life:

*“They regulate our lives. They set our calendars. They determine the length of the year. They divide the year into seasons. And they mark the passage of our days and nights. In that sense, the whole pulse of human life is regulated by the heavenly bodies. The sun determines our days. The moon determines the months. And the stars, sun, and moon all determine our seasons and years. Our whole calendar is thus determined by the stars, and even seasonal weather patterns are*

determined by the sun and the moon. Because the earth is tilted on its axis, the sun's rays strike different parts of the earth at different angles throughout the year. That produces the seasons that are so critical for the rejuvenation of life, the growing crops and the flourishing of the earth. is all in perfect balance and works to bless humanity with a variety of climates and weather patterns. The perfection with which these all operate is one of the great proofs that they were designed by a wise and gracious Creator. The length of our days and even our sleep patterns are set in perfect harmony with the amount of time it takes the earth to complete one full rotation. Imagine how different life on earth



*“Signs that mark seasons, days, and years.” By Lucas Cranach*

would be if the earth suddenly began rotating at one third its current speed. Days would be three times longer. We would be forced to stagger our sleep so that sometimes we would sleep during sunlight hours and remain awake during long hours of darkness. The variation in daytime and nighttime temperatures would be dramatically altered. Every rhythm of our lives would be overthrown. But all life on earth is perfectly suited to a twenty-four hour day, and according to Scripture, that is because the same Creator who made all living things also determined and fixed the length of our days.” (MacArthur, pp. 113-114)



*“The Fourth Day of Creation”*

Finally, the light-bearers are designed to serve **“as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.”** The light which had heretofore existed independently of these heavenly bodies, will now shine upon the earth through them. Note, once again, the geocentric perspective of the creation account. The sun, the moon, and all the stars are created for the sake of the earth.

It is once more significant to note that the heavenly bodies immediately carry out the purposes for which they were designed by God. Creation has the appearance of age from the instant of its inception. For example, the Spiral Andromeda, is 1,500,000 light years away from earth. It is the most distant cluster of stars visible to the naked eye. Based on this incredible distance, light from the Spiral Andromeda must travel through space for 1.5 million years before reaching the earth. Nonetheless, the light of this star shined upon the earth on the fourth day of creation. That was the purpose for which God made it. It functioned immediately. The light of this constellation didn’t have to wait 1.5 million years to get here.

**“And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.”** - The typical formula of divine approval is repeated, not because there was any doubt that it might be so, but so that we might recognize the perfection of God’s original creation. At the completion of the fourth day of creation the heavens in their vast array have come forth to spread light upon the earth.



*“The Fifth Day” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 1: 20-23***

***And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird, according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning - the fifth day.***

***“And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures...”*** The work of the fourth day had corresponded to that of the first day as the light which God created was focused and applied through the creation of the heavenly bodies. Now, on the fifth day, the division of the waters above and below the firmament amplified and completed as God creates aquatic animals and birds. At the creative command of God the waters suddenly swarmed with life. The emphasis in the original text is on the abundance of that life through the repetition of forms of the Hebrew verb *“sherets.”* The Hebrew literally reads - *“Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures.”*



The word carries the connotation of swift chaotic motion by massive numbers of creatures. The same word is used in Exodus 1:7 to describe the abundant fertility of the Israelites in Egypt: ***“But the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous so that the land was filled with them.”*** This image is in stark contrast to the evolutionary paradigm of torturously slow random development from single celled animals to more complex life forms.

*“The first introduction of animal life was not a fragile blob of protoplasm that happened to come together in response to electrical discharges over a primeval ocean, as evolutionists believe. Rather, the waters suddenly swarmed abundantly with living creatures.”* (Morris, p. 68)

The text stresses both the abundance and the variety of the aquatic life that God created.

The general term ***“living creatures”*** (Hebrew - *“nephesh hayya”*) is introduced for the first time in this verse. It will recur in v.24 in reference to land animals and in 2:7 in reference to man. While both plants and animals have life, the Bible distinguishes between the nature and quality of their lives.

*“The plant has life, is a living thing, but it is not a conscious living thing. The plant is not conscious of its own environment; it has no sense organs; it does not feet, does not consciously choose its environment. But now, with the creation of the animals, life becomes conscious life. The animal is conscious of its existence, it feels, sees, hears, is aware of heat and cold, feels hunger and thirst, selects its food and recognizes its offspring.”* (Rehwinkel, pp.155-156)

The noun *“nephesh”* -frequently translated as *“soul”* in the KJV - occurs 755 times in the Old Testament with a variety of meanings. Its Greek equivalent is the noun *“psyche.”* The etymological root of the word simply means *“breath”* or the act of *“breathing.”* From this root it extends naturally to the concept of *“life”* - animal life in general and human life in particular (cf. 1 Kings 21:22). These meanings overlap in Genesis 2:7 where the breath of God causes the inanimate clay of Adam’s body to be transformed into a ***“living creature”*** (Hebrew - *“nephesh hayya”*). It is also commonly used to refer to a person’s appetites, desires, or thoughts; our individual consciousness, identity or personality. In this sense, *“nephesh”* will later come to refer to the entire non-physical dimension of human life. It is that uniqueness in man

which enables human beings to relate to the Creator God - that which is separated from the body and lives on after physical death. This is the human “soul,” as that term is characteristically used in Christian theology. However, “nephesh” is not used in that specific sense in the opening chapters of Genesis. The unique quality of human life is strongly implied by the fact that while the “nephesh” of the other animals comes from the water and the land, the source of the “nephesh” of man is the very breath of God Himself. The creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 clearly indicates the unique identity of humankind as the crown of God’s creation. These texts do not, however use the word “nephesh” to make that point. What sets man apart here is not that he has a soul, but rather that he alone is created in the “image of God” (cf. Genesis 1:26-27).



*“The Creation of Sea Creatures and Birds” by Hartmann Schedel - 1493*

***“And so God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems...”*** - Aquatic animals of every sort and description are included in these words from the tiniest invertebrates to massive fish and mammals. The NIV’s ***“the great creatures of the sea”*** translates the intriguing Hebrew noun *“tannin”* (literally - *“the elongated or stretched out ones”*). This is, in all probability, a reference to massive marine dinosaurs (cf. *“Excursus - Dinosaurs in the Bible”* - p. 56 - for a detailed word study of this term in Scripture). The significance of these great creatures is indicated by the fact that they are the only animal life form specifically mentioned by name in the creation account other than man. The awesome beauty and range of marine life prompts this challenge to the evolutionist from Dr. Alfred Rehwinkel:

*“And so again we will ask all those who refuse to acknowledge a divine, omnipotent, all-wise Creator of heaven and earth, how will you explain the origin and development of all these wonders of the sea? How will you account for the first coral polyp, and whence came the spark of life, so peculiar, and the ability to perpetuate that life? How did it acquire its marvelous chemical laboratory which can convert ocean water into a skeleton of coral rock? How will you account for the countless species, forms, and colors among these creatures of the sea? And how did the butterfly fish learn to dress himself in such a gorgeous array of dazzling colors and style? And then, finally, why aren’t some modern crocodiles growing feathers and wings and getting ready to take to the air? Why did they stop this practice? To say that all this just happened by itself, but required millions of years to develop is no answer. It is a cheap and dishonest evasion of the real issue. And to wrap that kind of an answer in bombastic scientific verbiage is merely resorting to the tricks of the magician to deceive the naive and the credulous ...This is not science. It is nothing less than the world’s greatest hoax and fraud - sheer scientific quackery!”* (Rehwinkel, p.181)

***“And let birds fly above the earth, across the expanse of the sky”...So God created...every winged bird according to its kind.”*** - The language parallels and reflects that of the sea creatures. It suggests rapid erratic movement, flitting back and forth through the air at great speed along with great abundance in numbers. Scientists today identify 9,000 major species of birds. Each of these species is, in turn, divided into scores and often hundreds of sub-species. Birds are creatures fashioned for flight,



*“Archaeopteryx” by Mark Iley*

able to travel at amazing speeds. The hunting falcon descends upon its prey at speeds of 180 miles per hour while the tiny hummingbird can fly 60 miles per hour, hover in one place, and fly backwards and sideways. The migratory patterns of birds carry millions of these incredible creatures literally from one end of the planet to the other, over pathways through the sky that cover tens of thousands of miles. In direct contradiction to the Bible’s account of creation, Darwinian evolution insists that birds gradually evolved from more primitive reptiles, randomly developing feathers and flight. There is no support in the fossil record for this speculative conclusion.

## ***Excursus - “Archaeopteryx - Evolution’s Missing Transitional Form***

One of the most troubling features of the fossil record for proponents of evolution is the absence of “*transitional forms*” in the development of one species from another. If indeed all primitive life forms evolved gradually from more primitive creatures there ought to be an abundance of evidence in the fossil record to document the gradual mutation of one species into another. Such evidence simply does not exist!

In 1860, the fossilized remains of a feather were discovered in a limestone quarry at Solnhöfen near the Bavarian town of Eichstatt. Scientists designated the creature from which it presumably came "*Archaeopteryx lithographica*" ("*ancient feather from the lithographic stone*"). Since the stone in which the feather was found dated from the Jurassic era (150,000,000 years old), the fossil sold for an excellent price. A year later in 1861 the same quarry produced another fossil which included the complete skeleton of the ancient bird, minus its head and neck. In 1877 a second specimen was uncovered which included the head and neck. Each jaw held 13 teeth and the head itself was somewhat elongated like that of a lizard. In subsequent years four other *Archaeopteryx* fossils were found in the area. The fossils were obtained by an opportunistic collector who marketed them to the highest bidders. The first fossil was purchased by the British biologist Richard Owen, the curator of the British Museum in London. The second specimen, perhaps the best preserved in the series, was obtained by German industrialist Werner von Siemens and donated to the Humbolt Museum in Berlin. "*Archaeopteryx*" has been trumpeted across the scientific world as the long lost "*transitional form,*" physical proof of the evolution of birds from reptiles. "*This represents a classic discovery of a missing link - in this case between birds and their flightless ancestors.*" (Stanley, p. 452) After studying the British Museum's specimen in 1986, a panel of English scientists announced their conclusion that "*Archaeopteryx*" was a hoax. They contended that the feather impressions in the limestone had been added to the original fossil after its discovery. Needless to say, their announcement touched off a storm of debate - a debate which to date remains unresolved.

Assuming the validity of the find, "*Archaeopteryx*" fails to qualify as a genuine transitional form. Like birds today, "*Archaeopteryx*" had perching feet, wings, feathers, a bird-like skull and wishbone. Evolutionists contend that this creature was a reptile in the process of becoming a bird. They cite the fact that this bird had claws not only on its feet, but also on its wings, teeth in its bill, and a long bony tail. These features, they contend, demonstrate that it was, in fact, a reptile becoming a bird. The evidence, however, fails to support this conclusion. All of the characteristics in "*Archaeopteryx*" cited as reptilian have been observed in other bird species. There are at least three species of birds today that have claws on their wings - the Hoatzin in South America, and the Touraco and Ostrich in Africa. There is fossil evidence of other ancient birds with teeth. The bony structure of "*Archaeopteryx*" tail is very similar to that of a swan. This creature was simply a primitive bird, not a bird/reptile or a reptile in process of becoming a bird.

Furthermore, the credibility of “*Archaeopteryx*” as a transitional form between reptiles and birds has been decisively undermined by more recent discoveries of birds that predate him by millions of years. Paleontologists from Texas Tech University discovered the fossil remains of two crow sized birds in Triassic rock formations dated 75,000,000 years earlier than “*Archaeopteryx*.” Then, in 1977, James A. Jenson, a geologist from Brigham Young University, uncovered an unequivocal bird fossil in Lower Jurassic rock dated by evolutionists to be 65 million years older than “*Archaeopteryx*” in the Dry Mesa quarry of western Colorado. If birds were already on the scene between 65,000,000 and 75,000,000 years earlier, “*Archaeopteryx*” obviously cannot represent the transitional form linking birds to reptiles. Dr. John Ostrom of Yale University, perhaps the world’s leading authority on the origin of birds subsequently admitted: “*It is now obvious that we must now look for the ancestors of flying birds in a period much older than that in which Archaeopteryx lived.*” (Ostrom, *Science News*, 112, (1977), p. 198).

However, nearly 25 years later, somehow this admission has still not made it into



*“An Encounter Between a Pterodactyl and an Archaeopteryx” by Charles R. Knight*

most textbooks on geology and evolution. Two examples of this puzzling omission will suffice. *Dinosaurs*, a Time-Life Guide published in 2000, notes the crucial importance of uncovering transitional forms for the credibility of Darwinian evolution and the unique role of “*Archaeopteryx*” as the showcase transition:

*“Archaeopteryx played a pivotal role in the acceptance of evolution as a mainstream scientific theory. When Charles Darwin published On the Origin of Species in 1859, a perceived weakness in his argument was the absence of intermediate animals in the fossil record. If animals and plants have been changing from one form to another through time, as evolution suggests, then at least there should be some fossils of organisms intermediate in structure between different groups.”* (Pp. 30-131)

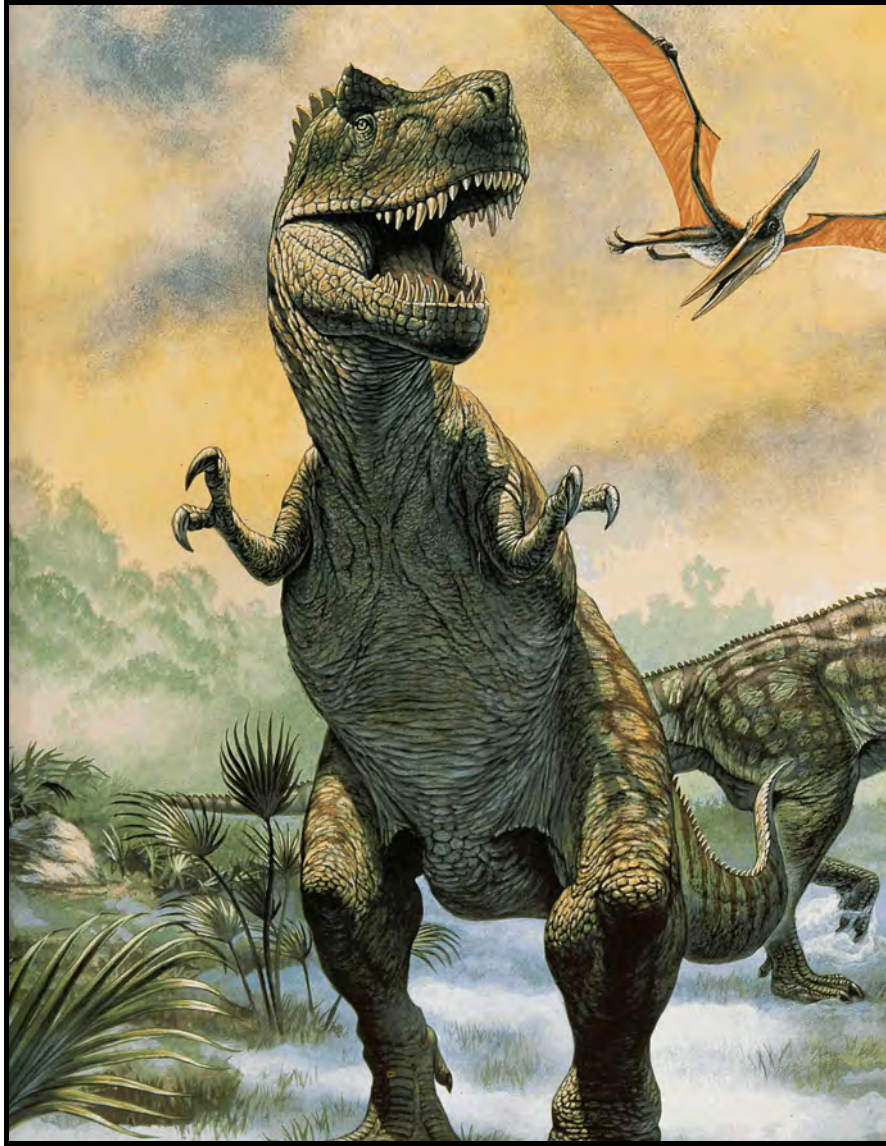
Perhaps it is because of the “*pivotal role*” “*Archaeopteryx*” has played in the acceptance of evolution that the book still hailed it as “*the missing link*” - more recent evidence to the contrary notwithstanding:

*“Possibly the most important fossil ever found, Archaeopteryx... preserves a mixture of features that make it a “missing link” between birds and other reptiles...Archaeopteryx displays an unambiguous mix of characters from two linked groups of animals - the birds and the dinosaurs - it is a classic and rare example of an organism on an evolutionary pathway between the two.”* (p. 130)

A 2001 edition of *Life Through the Ages* provides this obsolete and inaccurate information:

*“If ever a treasure has come down to us in all the remains unearthed through the years, surely it is Archaeopteryx, the answer to a fossil hunter’s prayer. For this little creature, no larger than a pigeon, is a link between the long-tailed scaly reptiles on the one hand, and the feathered birds on the other.”* (p.16)

There is no evidence of transitional forms. The missing link in the evolutionary chain is still missing.



*“Tyrannosaurus Rex” by John Sibbick*

## ***Excursus - Dinosaurs and the Bible***

The name “*dinosaur*” was coined by Sir Richard Owen, a nineteenth century British naturalist in 1840. It means “*terrible lizard.*” This modern term, of course, does not occur in the Bible. The incredible creatures which it describes, however, appear repeated in the inspired pages of Holy Writ.

Genesis 1 describes the origin of animal life on earth with these words: “***And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures and let the birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” And so God created the great creatures of the sea, and every living and moving thing with which the water teems.***” (Genesis 1:20-21) Throughout the entire creation account the plants and animals which God creates are



mentioned only in general categories. There are only two exceptions to this pattern. One of those exceptions is man. The other, although that is not clear in the NIV's English translation, is in the verse quoted above - "***the great creatures of the sea.***" The Hebrew noun is "*tannin.*" It literally means "*the stretched out or elongated ones.*" A sampling of English translations in Genesis 1:21 indicates the translators uncertainty as to the meaning of the word:

New International Version - "***great creatures of the sea***"

King James Version - "***great whales***"

Revised Standard Version - "***sea monsters***"

New American Standard Bible - "***sea monsters***"

The Living Bible - "***great sea animals***"

The Jerusalem Bible - "***great sea serpents***"

The New English Bible - "***sea monsters***"

Martin Luther translates "*tannin*" with the German word "*Wahlfische*" ("*whales*").

The noun "*Tannin*" occurs twenty-five times in the Old Testament. In the King James Version it is typically translated as "*dragon.*" In a few instances it appears to refer to ordinary serpents - "***Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh and it will become a snake...Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his officials and it became a snake...Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake***" (Exodus 7:9,10,12; cf. also Psalm 91:13) It is interesting to note that in his commentary on Exodus, Umberto Cassuto of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, translates "*tannin*" in these verses as "*crocodile.*" In other contexts - based on the undulating "*stretched out*" sound of their wails - it is used of the howling beasts that live in the barren wastes of the desert - wolves, wild dogs, or jackals - "***But the desert creatures will lie there; jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell...hyenas will howl in her strongholds, jackals in her luxurious palaces.***" (Isaiah 13:21-22; Job 30:29; Psalm 44:19; Isaiah 34:13; 35:7; 43:20; Jeremiah 9:11; 10:22; 14:6; 49:33; 51:37; Micah 1:8; Malachi 1:3).

However, in a great many other passages, "*tannin*" retains its original connotation of "*sea serpent,*" "*dragon*" or "*monster.*" Job laments God's oppressive presence in his suffering: "***Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep that you put me under guard?***" (Job 7:12). The Psalmist illustrates the omni-potence of God by His defeat of "*Leviathan*" - "***the monster*** (Hebrew - "*tannin*") ***in the waters.***" "***It was You***



*“The Destruction of Leviathon” by Gustav Dore*

*who split open the sea by Your power; You broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan.”* (Psalm 74:13-14). The great hymn of creation in Psalm 148 also includes a reference to the “*tannin.*” *“Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths.”* (Psalm 148:7). Like the Psalmist, the prophet Isaiah identifies the fierce “*Leviathan*” as one of the “*tannin.*” *“In that day the Lord will punish with His sword, His fierce, great, and powerful sword, Leviathan, the gliding serpent. Leviathan, the coiling serpent; He will slay the monster of the sea.”* (Isaiah 27:1)

In the poetic writings of the prophets, the ancient dragons, the “*tannin,*” are used to represent the evil power of Israel’s enemies. Isaiah uses the word “*tannin*” in his contemptuous dismissal of the power of Egypt. In the prophetic polemic against

Israel's historic foe, Egypt is frequently identified as the dragon, "**Rahab**," the name of one of the chaos monsters of Sumerian and Babylonian mythology. Isaiah utilizes this association to issue an ironic reminder of Egypt's devastating defeat at the Red Sea. He calls upon God to defeat the Egyptians again just as He had in the past: "**Was it not You who cut Rahab to pieces, Who pierced that monster ("tannin") through? Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, Who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over?**" (Isaiah 51:9-10; cf. also 30:7; Job 9:13; 26:12; Psalm 89:10). The term "*tannin*" recurs in Jeremiah's grotesque depiction of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian conqueror of Jerusalem, as a gluttonous monster which has engulfed Israel: "**Nebuchadnezzar has devoured us, he has thrown us into confusion, he has made us an empty jar. Like a dragon ("tannin") he has swallowed us and filled his stomach with our delicacies, and then has spewed us out.**" Ezekiel denounces Egypt's Pharaoh as a raging monster among the nations and promises his utter destruction: "**You are like a lion among the**



*"Monosaurus - A Carnivorous Marine Dinosaur" by John Sibbick*

*nations, you are like a monster (“tannin”) in the seas, thrashing about in your streams, churning the water with your feet and muddying the streams.”* (Ezekiel 32:2; cf. also 29:3). This theme culminates in the New Testament book of Revelation with its depiction of Satan as the **“great red dragon”** (Greek - *“drakon”*) (Revelation 12:3). The consistent theme in these texts is that the *“tannin”* were the most magnificent creatures of the sea, unique in their massive size and awesome strength. Given the meaning of the Hebrew word, illustrated by its usage throughout the Old Testament and its immediate context in Genesis 1, it would seem fair to conclude that the *“tannin”* of Genesis 1:21 are a reference to marine dinosaurs - massive elongated reptilian creatures of the sea. These beings were so magnificent that they were singled out for special mention in the text of Genesis.



*“The Great Red Dragon of Revelation*

Evolutionists insist that dinosaurs and men are separated from one another by millions

of years in time. Yet the Bible contains what might be considered an eyewitness description of two of these great beasts. These descriptions are included in the fascinating book of Job, considered by many to be the most ancient part of the Old Testament. In Job chapter 40 God speaks of a massive creature called **“Behemoth”** (Hebrew - *“wild beast”*). He cites this giant as a demonstration of His divine power and authority. The text makes it clear that this is no ordinary animal. **“Behemoth” ranks first among the works of God.”**

***“Look at Behemoth which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins, and what power in the muscles of his belly! His tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are close-knit. His bones like tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron. He ranks first among the works of God, yet his Maker can approach him with His sword. The hills bring him their produce, and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plants he lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh. The lotuses conceal him in their shadow; the poplars by the stream surround him. When the river rages, he is not alarmed; he is secure though the Jordan should surge against his mouth. Can anyone capture him by the eyes, or trap him and pierce his nose?”*** (Job 40:15-24)

**“Behemoth”** is a massive, mighty, plant-eating creature, as comfortable on the water as in the land. He is non-aggressive, a creature that poses no threat as **“all the wild animals play nearby.”** This beast has a unique skeletal system, unlike any other in its strength and configuration - **“like rods of iron”** - to support his huge body with its massive tail that **“sways like a cedar.”** In every detail this is a description of the largest, longest, tallest and heaviest of all the land animals - **“Sauropod”** (*“Lizard Feet”*) dinosaur. The largest member of this family, the **“Ultrasaurus,”** was one hundred feet long and weighed one hundred to one hundred and fifty tons. The bones of his shoulder blades were nine feet long to support the great neck that raised his head sixty feet above the ground. Scientists estimate that because of his massive size he required four to five tons of plant food every day. Lutheran creation scientist and Bible scholar Walter Lang explains why the phrase - **“his tail sways like a cedar”** is a particularly apt description of this type of dinosaur: *“The cedar tree has one long trunk tapering with stiff twigs and leaves. This fits a brachiosaurus which sometimes has a tail 19 feet in length and 4.2 feet across at the base. This structure demands slow movement.”* (Lang, p. 491) By any standard, this magnificent creature would rank **“first among the works of God.”**



*“A Giant Brachiosaurus Surprised by a Predatory Certosaurus” by John Sibbick*

In Job 41, the Creator describes yet another massive beast that bears a striking resemblance to the creatures we now call dinosaurs. His name is “*Leviathan*” (Hebrew - “*the coiling, twisting one*”). Unlike the placid Behemoth, this savage marine animal breathes fire and brings death.

*“Can you pull in the leviathan with a fish hook, or pull in his tongue with a rope? Can you put a cord through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he keep begging you for mercy? Will he speak to you with gentle words? Will he make an agreement with you to take him as your slave for life? Can you make a pet of him like a bird, or put him on a leash for your girls? Will traders barter for him? Will they divide him up among the merchants? Can you fill his hide with harpoons or his head with fishing spears? If you lay a hand on him you will remember the struggle and never do it again. Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering. No one is fierce enough to rouse him. Who then is able to stand against Me? Who has a claim against Me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to Me. I will not fail to speak of his limbs, his strength and his graceful form. Who can strip off his outer coat? Who would approach him with a bridle? Who dares open the doors of his mouth, ringed about with his fearsome teeth? His back has rows of shields tightly sealed together; each is so close to the next that no air can pass between them. They are joined fast to one another; they cling together and cannot be parted. His snorting throws out flashes of light; his eyes are like the rays of dawn. Firebrands stream from his mouth; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke pours from his nostrils as from a boiling pot over a fire of reeds. His breath sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from his mouth. Strength resides in his neck; dismay goes before him. The folds of his flesh are tightly joined; they are firm and immovable. His chest is hard as rock; hard as a lower millstone. When he rises up, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before his thrashing. The sword that reaches him has no effect, nor does the spear, or the dart, or the javelin. Iron he treats like straw, and bronze like rotten wood. Arrows do not make him flee; sling stones are like chaff to him. A club seems to him but a piece of straw; he laughs at the rattling of the lance. His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge. He makes the depths churn like a boiling cauldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. Behind him he leaves a*

*glistening wake; one would think the deep had white hair. Nothing on earth is his equal; a creature without fear.” (Job 41:1-33)*

Leviathan appears again in Psalm 74:14 where the sovereign power of the Creator is affirmed by the fact that ***“It was You who crushed the head of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert.”*** In Psalm 104:24-26 we are told that Leviathan is a creature of the sea: ***“There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number - living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan which you formed to frolic there.”*** As noted above, Isaiah identifies Leviathan as one the great *“tannin”* created by God on the fifth day. ***“In that day, the Lord will punish with His sword, His fierce, great and powerful sword, Leviathan, the gliding serpent, Leviathan, the coiling serpent; He will slay***



*“Now Behold Behemoth and Leviathan” by William Blake*



*the monster of the sea.*” (Isaiah 27:1) For the prophet Amos, Leviathan becomes an agent of God’s judgment. He alludes to this terrifying creature in his warning that none in Israel shall escape the judgment of God: **“Though they hide from Me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them.”** (Amos 9:3). The same theme is sounded earlier in Job when the patriarch describes those who dare to trifle with God’s judgment as **“those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.”** (Job 3:8). The Biblical text bears an almost uncanny resemblance to modern scientific descriptions of marine dinosaurs. The massive Kronosaurus grew to be fifty-six feet long with jaws ten feet long that were filled in ten inch teeth. Elasmosaurus was forty-three feet long and looked very much like the monsters frequently reported in Scotland’s Loch Ness. The fire-breathing component in Leviathan’s arsenal is not unknown in the world of nature today. On a much smaller scale, the bombardier beetle blasts his foes with chemical combustion and electric eels still give anyone who threatens them the shock of their lives. Traditions and legends of sea monsters and fire breathing dragons are common to virtually every human culture on the face of the earth. Widespread reports of terrifying encounters with such creatures persist well into the modern era.

Job 40 is the only reference to **“Behemoth”** in Scripture. **“Leviathan”** is mentioned six times, in Job, Psalms, and Isaiah. However, these great creatures also appear in the apocryphal writings of the Inter-Testamental Period. 2 Baruch, tells us that Behemoth was created, along with Leviathan, among the great creatures of the sea, the *“tannin,”* on the fifth day of creation: *“And Behemoth will reveal itself from its place and Leviathan will come from the sea, the two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation and which I shall have kept until that time.”* (2 Baruch 29:4). The second book of Esdras details the Genesis creation account. It indicates that among the *“tannin”* fashioned on the fifth day of creation were two creatures so massive that the seas could not contain them both. Leviathan remained in the water and Behemoth was given the land:

*“Then Thou didst keep in existence two living creatures; the name of one Thou didst call Behemoth and the name of the other Leviathan. And Thou didst separate one from the other, for the seventh part where the water had been gathered together could not hold them both. And Thou didst give Behemoth one of the parts that had been dried up on the third day, to live in it, where there are a thousand mountains; but to Leviathan Thou didst give the seventh part, the watery part.”* (2 Esdras 6:49-52; cf. also 1 Enoch 60:7-9,24)

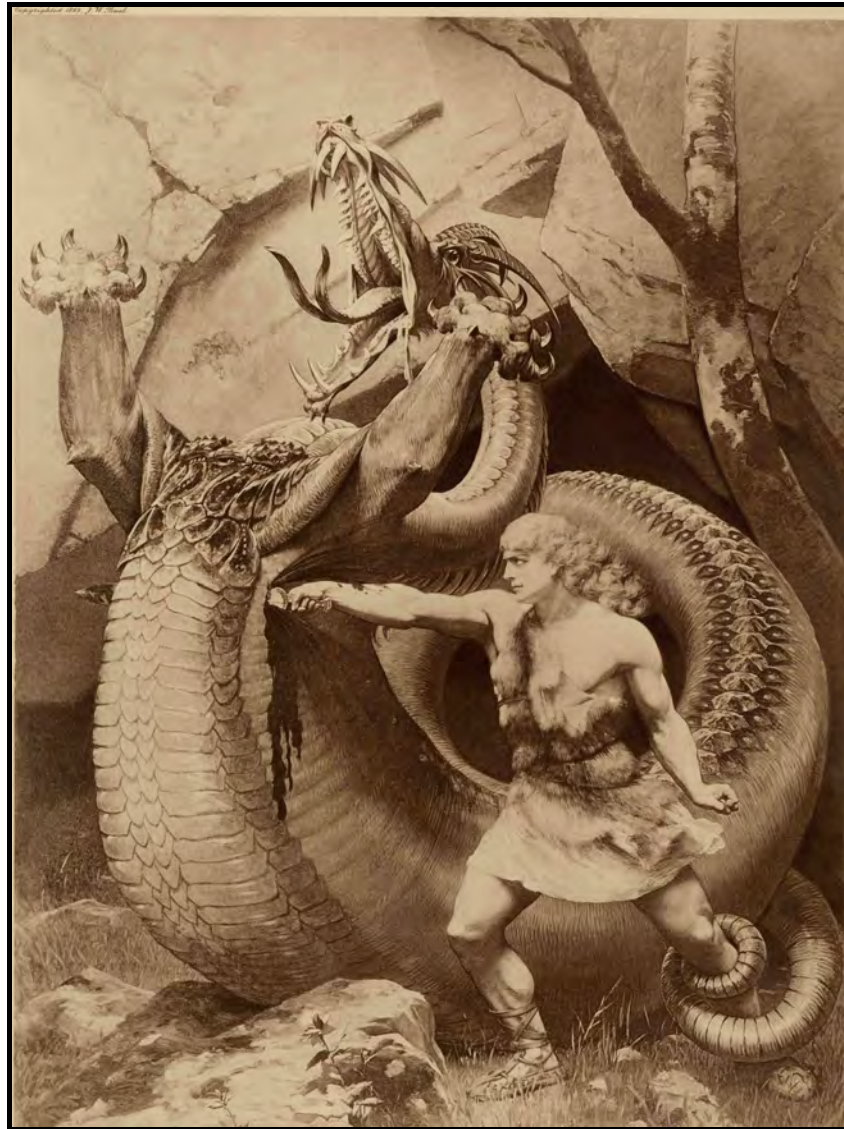
In the “*Apocalypse of Abraham*,” Leviathan is cited as Lord of all the creatures of the sea, an agent of chaos and destruction: “*And I saw there the sea and its islands and its cattle and its fish, and Leviathan and his realm, and his bed and his lairs, and the world which lay upon him, and his motions and the destruction he caused the world.*” (Apocalypse of Abraham 21:4).



*“Velociraptor”*

The existence of the great creatures we now call dinosaurs is clearly documented in Scripture. The Bible teaches that between 1,500 and 2,000 years after creation God destroyed the vast majority of life on earth in a world-wide flood. The only land animals that survived this catastrophe were taken into the ark with the patriarch Noah and his family. Our conviction that the Bible is the Word of God necessitates our acceptance of that which the Bible teaches as a reliable account of actual events. We must then conclude that dinosaurs were a part of God’s original perfect creation and were taken into the ark along with representatives of all the other land animals. Given the great

size of these creatures, it may be that juvenile specimens of each dinosaur species were carried on the ark. In the aftermath of the flood, the earth experienced devastating geological and climatic changes. The ideal environment which God had fashioned was shattered as the “*floodgates of the heavens*” and the “*springs of the great deep*” were opened (Genesis 7:11). The warm temperate climate which had prevailed prior to the flood was replaced by extreme shifts in temperature and violent storms. Massive ice caps were formed at the North and South Poles as sea levels fluctuated by hundreds of feet and massive glaciers advanced and retreated over much of the earth’s land area. Continents were torn apart and reformed again as the earth’s crust buckled and shifted. Volcanoes erupted around the globe, blasting tons of ash and debris into the atmosphere, blocking the sun’s rays and lowering temperatures everywhere. New, higher mountain ranges soared against the dark sky and vast areas



*“Siegfried Slaying the Rhine Dragon Fafnir” by K. Dielitz*

where before life had flourished became barren empty deserts. The post-flood world was a much less hospitable place, and those life forms that could not adapt gradually became extinct. Huge creatures like the dinosaurs who needed massive amounts of food every day would have found it most difficult to survive in large numbers. As cold-blooded reptiles, they would also have been most vulnerable to the drastic climatic changes which swept the planet’s atmosphere. It would seem that most of the dinosaurs failed to adapt to the harsh new conditions and gradually died out during the tumultuous times that followed the flood. It may be that a limited number of these great creatures did survive. The universal legends and traditions of dragons and sea monsters bear witness to man’s encounters with the remnants of the “*terrible lizards*” down through the centuries. Perhaps in the dark depths of the sea and those few remaining places safely isolated from man’s proliferating presence, the descendants

of the great dinosaurs still walk the earth.

**“So God created...And God saw that it was good.”** - The word “create” (Hebrew - “bara”) occurs here for the second time in the chapter to describe the origin of animal life. Conscious life comes into being out of nothing by the creative power of the Word of God. John MacArthur notes:

*“Notice that verse 21 explicitly says, **“God created”** them. The Hebrew verb is bara, which always speaks of direct creation. It explicitly rules out the possibility that these creatures evolved through some ages long process. Together with the description of how God decreed their existence by speaking the command, it demands that we understand the origin of these creatures as an act of fiat creation, not an evolutionary process.”* (MacArthur, p. 125)

As is consistently the case throughout the creation account, God affirms the goodness of that which He has made. The creatures of the water and the air were perfectly designed to accomplish that for which they were intended by God. They would be able to carry out their assigned role within the order of creation as part of the ideal environment for humankind.

**“And God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number...”** - The reproductive capability of birds and sea creatures, which enables them to survive and multiply despite massive mortality rates, comes about as a blessing from God. The natural mating instincts of these creatures and their capacity to produce numerous offspring is the result of this divine blessing. This word of blessing will be repeated in the aftermath of the flood (cf. Genesis 8:17). Procreation in Scripture is seen as a blessing - the opportunity to participate in and perpetuate God’s work of creation. Divine blessing is a basic theme throughout the book of Genesis. God blesses animals (1:22), mankind (1:28), the Sabbath (2:3), Adam (5:2), Noah (9:1), and the patriarchs (12:3; 17:16, 20, etc.). *“Where modern man talks of success, Old Testament man talked of blessing.”* (Wenham, p. 24) This emphasis on God’s blessings serves to remind us of creation’s ongoing dependence upon the Creator God. The blessing of God is not a mere wish or statement of desire on the part of the Almighty. It is a creative word of power which makes possible the things that it commands. That enabling power is ongoing. It continues in effect to this very day. The wondrous events of the fifth day of creation are concluded with the standard formula - **“And there was evening, and there was morning - the fifth day.”**



*“The Sixth Day of Creation” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 1:24-31***

*And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them and said to them: “Be fruitful and increase*

*in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every living creature that moves on the ground. Then God said, "I give you every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day.*

*"And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures..." - God's work of creation comes to its climax on the sixth day. The sea and the air have been filled with abundant life and now God proceeds to fashion life upon the dry land. The parallel expressions "**And God said**" and "**God made**" continue to express the efficacy of the divine Word. They are equivalent expressions, each explaining the other. "God's creative work was instantaneous, accomplished by nothing more or less than His creative decree. He simply gave the command for things to appear - "and it was so." What He commanded was instantly made complete, fixed, and in place essentially as it has been every since."(MacArthur, p. 141). The fourth day had completed the work of the first, and the fifth day had completed the work of the second. Now the sixth day completes the work of the third day on which the dry land and plant life had been created. The correspondence is indicated by the repetition of the phrase "**Let the land produce...**" (cf. vs.11). The Hebrew text once again uses the words "*nephesh hayya*" (literally - "living souls") to describe the land animals which the Lord God makes. In this sense it has been aptly stated that from the perspective of the opening chapters of Genesis man does not merely have a soul - he is a soul. Leupold explains the development of this important word in the Old Testament:*

*"Let it be remarked separately at this point that according to the Scriptures not only man has a soul but also all living creatures even down to fishes and birds. However, the soul, as such, is then regarded merely as the animating principle, the thing that causes them to breathe. Yet the soul of other creatures is not the same as that of man; it originated in a manner that makes it inferior by much to the animating principle in man, as a comparison with 2:7 indicates." (Leupold, p. 83; for a more complete discussion of the meaning of "*nephesh*" cf. notes pp.60-61)*

*"livestock, creatures that move along the ground and wild animals" - The animal*



*“The Creatures of Eden” by Jan Bruegel*

kingdom is broken down into three broad categories which include all forms of animal life on the land - insects, spiders, worms, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. The Austrian composer Joseph Hayden pictures this moment in his magnificent *“Creation Oratorio:”*

*“Strait opening forth her fertile womb the earth brought forth at God’s command  
Creature of every kind - all fully grown in countless numbers.*

*Contented, roaring, stands the lion there:*

*Here supple and light the tiger appears;*

*Raising his antlered head, speeds swift the stag;*

*All vigor and fire, with flying mane, impatient neighs the noble steed;*

*The pasture green the cattle seek their food, divided into herds;*

*And o’er the meadows, see far and wide the fleecy scattered sheep;*

*Like sand clouds whirling, in myriads swarming, rise hosts of insects.”*

*(Joseph Hayden, “The Creation” Aria 22)*

To categorize the entire animal kingdom in three general categories is “a favorite device of Hebrew writers and legislators.” (Wenham, p. 25) The terminology is deliberately inclusive and fluid. It should not be expected to conform or compare to the modern Linnean system of animal taxonomy (cf. Notes, pp. 46-47). The first category, “**livestock**,” is the Hebrew word “*behemah*.” It is drawn from a root which means to be without the capacity of speech, to be dumb or mute. In its most general sense Scripture uses the word to refer to all animal life forms other than man (i.e. Exodus 9:9,10,22). As is the case in this text, it is often contrasted with wild animals to indicate those species which are capable of being domesticated. The NIV’s translation “**livestock**” should probably be broadened to “*domesticated animals*.” The second classification, “**creatures that move along the ground**,” is the Hebrew term “*remes*.” It is derived from a word which means “*to move or glide about lightly*.” It refers to all those creatures which creep upon the ground upon short legs or no legs at all - reptiles, small mammals, insects, spiders, and worms. We tend to scorn these creatures as “*creepy*” - but they play a crucial role in the balance of nature fashioned by the divine Creator.



“The Creation of the Animal World” by VW - 1685



*“Among the “creeping things” included in Genesis 1:24-25 are countless forms of insects, worms, arachnids, reptiles, small mammals, and other amazing creatures. Living under the curse of sin we tend to think of many of these creatures as repulsive pests, but they were all created with good purposes, and they reveal the creative diversity, wisdom, and glory of God just as clearly as we see His majesty in the stars. The realm of creeping things is a world of wonders, like every other aspect of God’s creation...Virtually all of them serve a unique and important function, each doing its own part to maintain earth’s ecosystems. The way it all works together so perfectly is clear evidence of an intelligent Designer.”*  
 (MacArthur, pp. 147,150)



*“The Creation of the Animal Kingdom” by J.J. Sandrart 1730 - “God created the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the beasts, the serpents and the cattle on the earth and in its depths. No creature is so small in all the world, that it does not show forth its Creator’s glory and might.”*

The final category is **“wild animals”** (Hebrew - *“chayyath haarets”*). These are creatures in whom the vitality of life *“chay”* flows with great power. They are untamed and untamable. The threefold enumeration serves well to call to mind all the animal life forms which exist upon the land.

***“According to their kinds...”*** - These verses repeat the reference to ***“kinds”*** (Hebrew - *“min”*) five times. The emphasis upon the species as the basic reproductive category of plant and animal life is most emphatic. Inherent in this clear emphasis is the truth that all forms of life exist in accordance with the original pattern carefully determined by the Creator. It would almost seem that the text anticipates the foolishness of modern Darwinism and seeks to conclusively refute it in advance. *“The genetic code built into each life-form maintains the characteristics of the various types and species. It rules out spontaneous generation and it rules out macro-evolution. Her both Scripture and science agree against the evolutionary doctrine.”* (MacArthur, p. 143)



***“The Creation of the Animals” (Including Unicorns) by Tobias Stimmer***

***“Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image...”*** - The arrival of creation’s crowning moment is signaled by divine deliberation. This is a characteristic device in the creation account to indicate an event of particular importance and enable the reader to understand the mind of God. *“A divine counsel precedes the creation of man. By this means the singular dignity of man is very strongly stressed. From every point of view, man is seen to be the crown and climax of God’s creation.”* (Leupold, pp. 85-86) St. John Chrysostom insists that these words may not be construed to indicate uncertainty or hesitation on the part of the divine Creator. The point of the phrase is the honor that is paid to humanity by this distinction:

*“‘Let us make’ suggests deliberation, collaboration, and conference with another person. So what is it whose pending creation is granted so great an honor? It is humanity, the greatest and most marvelous of living beings, and the creation most worthy of honor before God...There is here this deliberation, collaboration, and communion not because God needs advice - God forbid saying such a thing! - but so that the very impact of the language of our creation would show us honor.” (Louth, p. 28)*

This divine counsel, preceding the creation of humankind, serves to announce and implement the eternal plan of His love in creation and redemption which had been conceived before time began. As St. Paul asserts to Timothy:

***“Join me in suffering for the Gospel, by the power of God, Who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done, but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.”***(2 Timothy 1:9; cf. also 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 17:18)

An ornate baroque woodcarving entitled *“The Counsel of the Trinity,”* on the altar of the Holy Trinity in the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in the Bavarian village of Oberammergau, depicts this event. In the exquisite woodcarving, God the Father leans forward toward His beloved Son, as if seeking His consent to the humiliation and death which He will be called upon to endure for the salvation of humanity. God the Son gestures His submission to the Father’s will as the Dove of the Spirit hovers



***“The Counsel of the Trinity” from the  
Pfarrkircke St. Peter und Paul, Oberammergau***

above the pair in the golden triangle which symbolizes the doctrine of the Trinity. The angel behind Christ hold the cross upon which the Savior will offer His innocent life. The entire scene is surrounded by the golden glory cloud of the divine presence.

The plural nouns and pronouns used in Genesis 1 in reference to God are an implicit reference to the Trinity - the God Who is One in Three and Three in One. As H.C. Leupold corrects contends, the disdain of modern liberal commentators notwithstanding, this is the only interpretation which does justice to the text of Scripture:

*“Though almost all commentators in our day reject the view that this is to be explained in connection with the Holy Trinity, and treat this so-called Trinitarian view as a very negligible quantity, yet, rightly considered, this is the only view that will satisfy...Those that hold that a reference to the Trinity is involved do not mean to say that the truth of the Holy Trinity is here fully and plainly revealed. But they do hold that God speaks out of the fullness of His powers and His attributes in a fashion which man could never employ. Behind such speaking lies the truth of the Holy Trinity, which, as it grows increasingly clear in revelation, is in the light of later clear revelation discovered as contained in this plural in a kind of obscure adumbration.”* (Leupold, p. 86)

This is, and has always been, the view of historic Christendom. For example, writing in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, Bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe, cites this text as evidence that the doctrine of the Trinity is taught *“in the strongest fashion”* from the very beginning of Scripture. The good bishop finds the distinction between the one essence and three persons of the Trinity reflected in the contrast between the singular noun *“image”* and the plural pronouns **“us”** and *“our.”*

*“Therefore let us hold that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are by nature one God; neither is the Father the One who is the Son, nor the Son the One who is the Father, nor the Holy Spirit the One who is the Father or the Son. For the essence, that which the Greeks call the “ousia,” of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is one in which*



*“The Divine Trinity” by Lucas Cranach the Elder*

*essence the Father is not one thing and the Son a second thing and the Holy Spirit still a third thing, although in person the Father is different, the Son is different, and the Holy Spirit is different. All this is demonstrated for us in the strongest fashion at the very beginning of the Holy Scriptures, when God says, Let us make human beings in our image and likeness.” When using the singular number He says “image,” He shows that the nature is one in whose image the human being was to be made. But when He says “our,” in the plural He shows that the very same God in whose image the human being was to be made was not one*

*in person. For if in the one essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there were one person, “in our image” would not have been spoken but “in My image.”* (Louth, p. 30)

Martin Luther also strongly affirms a Trinitarian understanding of this passage. He writes in his Genesis Commentary:

*“The words “Let us make” are aimed at making sure that the mystery of our faith, by which we believe that from eternity there is one God, and that there are three separate persons in one Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Jews, indeed, try in various ways to get around this passage but they advance nothing sound against it....Thereby Moses forcefully shows us that within the very Godhead and the creating Essence there is one inseparable and eternal plurality. This not even the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18) can take from us...But you say, “These evidences are too dark to prove such an important article of faith.” I answer: at that time these statements had to be made so darkly by divine counsel, or at least because all things were reserved for that future Lord for whose arrival was reserved the restitution of all things (Acts 3:21), of all knowledge, and of all revelations. Therefore, what had previously been taught through enigmas, as it were, Christ made clear and commanded to be preached in plain language. And yet, the holy patriarchs had this knowledge through the Holy Spirit, although not with such clarity as now, when we hear mentioned in the New Testament the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When Christ came, those seals had to be broken; and what had been communicated in dark words previously, solely out of respect for the future Teacher, had to be preached plainly.”* (Luther, AE, 1, pp. 57-59)

**“Let us make man...”** - The text uses the Hebrew noun “*adham*” whose root significance goes back to the soil, the red earth (Hebrew - “*adhamah*”). In Chapter 2's more detailed account of man's creation the significance of this name is demonstrated by the fact that God forms man from the dust of the ground (cf. Genesis 2:7). In this way man is linked to the material world in which he will dwell. As the next words in this key phrase will indicate, man is more than mere matter. There is a unique spiritual dimension to this creature whom God fashions in His own image and likeness. And yet man is “*adham*,” of the earth. This is not the result of sin. Were man never to have experienced the curse of death (cf. Genesis 3:19 - **“for dust you are and to dust**

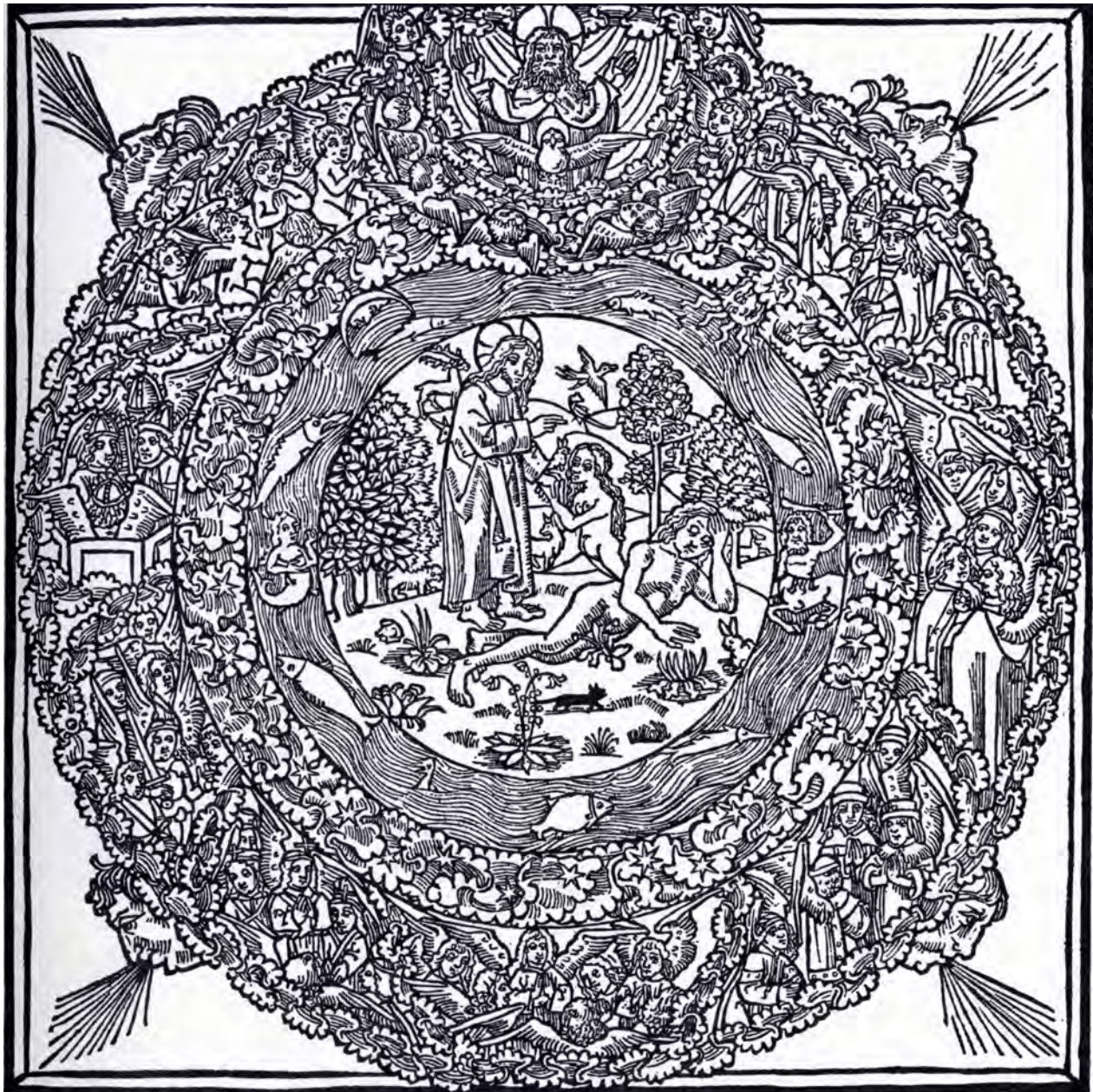
*you will return*”) he would still, by virtue of his original creation, be of the earth. Like all else, this was intended by God to be the source of great blessing for the unique being upon whom He would lavish His love. There is no room here for the anti-materialism of the Greek philosophers(or the legions in western culture who have followed them) which despised the physical world and longed for the imaginary freedom of a ethereal realm. Unlike Socrates, the Bible could never view the body as “*the prison house of the soul*” for God created man from the earth and of the earth. Rehwinkel summarizes the meaning of all this with these well-chosen words:

*“Man is a microcosm in contrast to the macrocosm of the universe, not only because the Creator endowed him with a mind which enables him to encompass the entire universe and relate himself to it, but also because in his body he incorporates elements that are found in the universe, so he becomes part of it. He is the epitome of God’s whole creation. Man is the bridge between the material and the immaterial, between the visible and the invisible, between earth and heaven. Man was created for both.”*  
(Rehwinkel, p. 215)



*“God creates Adam from a Lump of Clay” by Hartmann Schedel*

“*Adham*” is both a proper name, that of the first man, Adam, and a noun. When used as a noun, like its English counterpart, it can refer generically to humankind, including both men and women, as in this text (cf. also Genesis 1:27; 5:2). It can also be used more specifically to refer to the male gender. One commentator points out the key importance of this dual designation in this way:



*“The Creation of Mankind” from the Lübecker Bibel - 1494*



*“But God’s naming of the race “man” whispers male headship, which Moses will bring forth boldly in chapter 2. God did not name the human race “woman.” If “woman” had been the more appropriate and illuminating designation, no doubt God would have used it. He does not even devise a neutral word like “persons.” He called us “man” which anticipates the male headship brought out clearly in chapter 2.”*  
(Ortland, p. 98)

**“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”** - The two terms - **“image”** (Hebrew *“tselem”*) and **“likeness”** (Hebrew - *“demuth”*) parallel one another. The former, derived from a root which mean *“to cut or carve”* expresses the concept of similarity more concretely, while the latter simply means *“to be like or to resemble”* in a more general or abstract sense. The complimentary use of the words here is further indicated by their interchange in chapter 5 (cf. 5:1-3).

Humanity is unique among the myriad life forms which God created because humanity is created in the **“image”** and after the **“likeness”** of God. In the first instance, that means that Adam and Eve were without sin. They knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly content to live according to His will. The detailed account of man’s creation in chapter 2 explains and defines the meaning of man’s creation in God’s image. As creatures fashioned in God’s image humanity had the unique ability and responsibility to make moral choices (Genesis 2:15-15); to reason and communicate rationally with one another and with God (Genesis 2:20, 23); and, the capacity and the need for love (Genesis 2:18-24). Luther colorfully defines the nature of God’s image in these words:

*“Therefore, the image of God according to which Adam was created, was something far more distinguished and excellent, since obviously no leprosy of sin adhered either to his reason or to his will. Both his inner and outer sensations were of the purest kind. His intellect was the clearest, his memory was the best, and his will was the most straightforward - all in the most beautiful tranquillity of mind, without fear of death and without any anxiety. To these inner qualities came also the most beautiful and superb qualities of body and limbs, qualities in which he surpassed all the remaining living creatures. I am convinced that before Adam’s sin his eyes were so clear and sharp that they surpassed those of the lynx and the eagle. He was stronger than the lions and the bears, whose strength is very great, and he handled them the way*

*we handle puppies. Both the loveliness and the quality of the fruit he used as food were also far superior to what they are now...Therefore, my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that He was good, but that he also lived a life that was wholly godly; that is, he was without the fear of death or any other danger, and was content with God's favor."*  
Luther, AE, 1, p.62f.)

The image of God was lost when our first parents disobeyed God and fell into sin. Their will and intellect lost the ability to perfectly know and please Him. Even their capacity for love was twisted into an expression of selfish manipulation (cf. Genesis 3:18-19) In Adam's family history his creation in the image of God is carefully noted. However, a generation later, in the aftermath of the fall, the birth of Seth, the son whom God gave them to take the place of murdered Abel is noted in these words: ***"When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image, and he named him Seth."*** (Genesis 5:3). The text specifically uses the same language to describe the birth of Seth but the image is no longer God's. It is that of fallen Adam. For the believer, the image of God is restored as we ***"put on the new man"*** in Christ ***"Do not lie to each other since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."*** (Colossians 3:9-10; cf. also Ephesians 4:24) This restoration, however, will only be complete when we live with Him in heaven, free from sin and all of its consequences.

***"And let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air...."*** - The image of God expresses itself in mankind's responsibility to exercise dominion over the earth. Mankind is to ***"rule"*** over all the other life forms that God created, that is to say, that mankind is to be God's steward of the earth with jurisdiction over all of its vast resources. The verb ***"let them rule"*** is the Hebrew ***"radhah"*** which means ***"to trample down or to have mastery over."*** The entire animal kingdom is described in four broad categories similar to those previously cited in Genesis 1 - ***"the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, over the livestock...and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*** The earth itself and all the plants that grow upon the earth are also added in the general words - ***"over all the earth."*** David refers to this God-given dominion in the inspired words of Psalm 8:

***"You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned***

*him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; You put everything under his feet; all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, all that swim in the paths of the seas.”*  
(Psalm 8:5-8)



*“The Creation of Man” by Harmut Schedel - 1493*

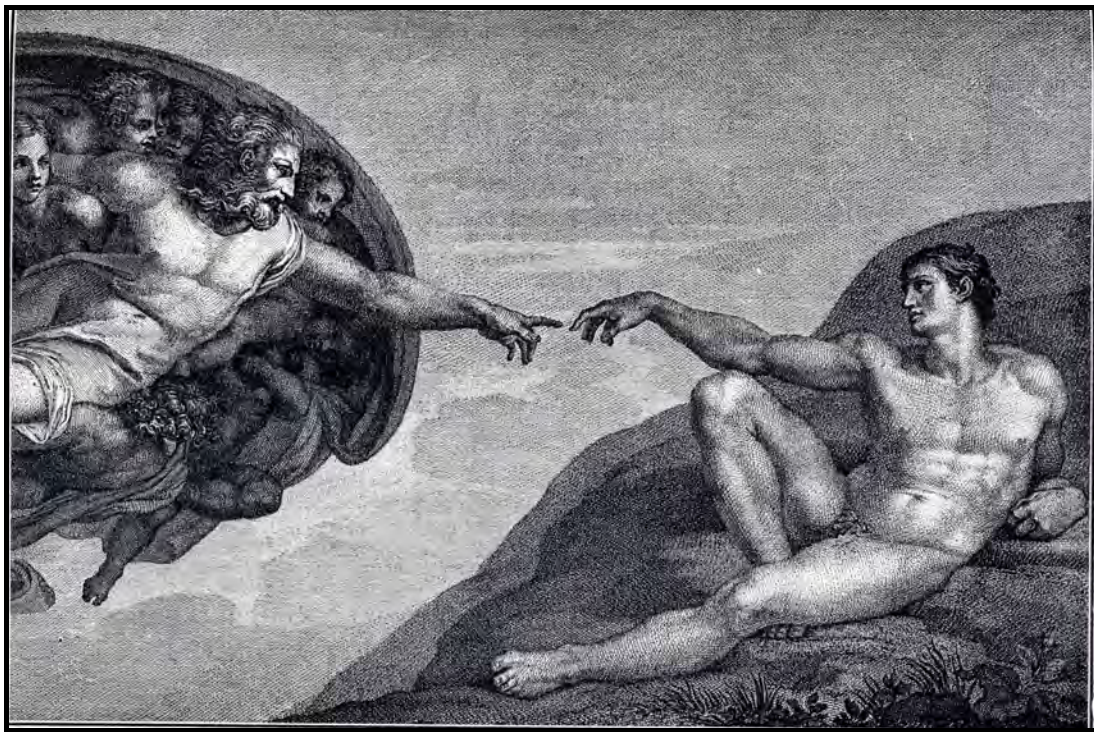
Later, in Psalm 115, the psalmist reaffirms: ***“The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth He has given to man.”*** (Psalm 115:16). The text clearly connects the image of God with man’s authority/responsibility to exercise dominion. Man is to rule God’s world on God’s behalf as a careful steward, charged by God to use that which God entrusted to him carefully and well. Francis Schaeffer notes the close connection between the concept of the image of God and man’s dominion over the earth.

*“It is on the basis of being created in the image of God that man has dominion over the other things in the world about him. It isn’t that man*

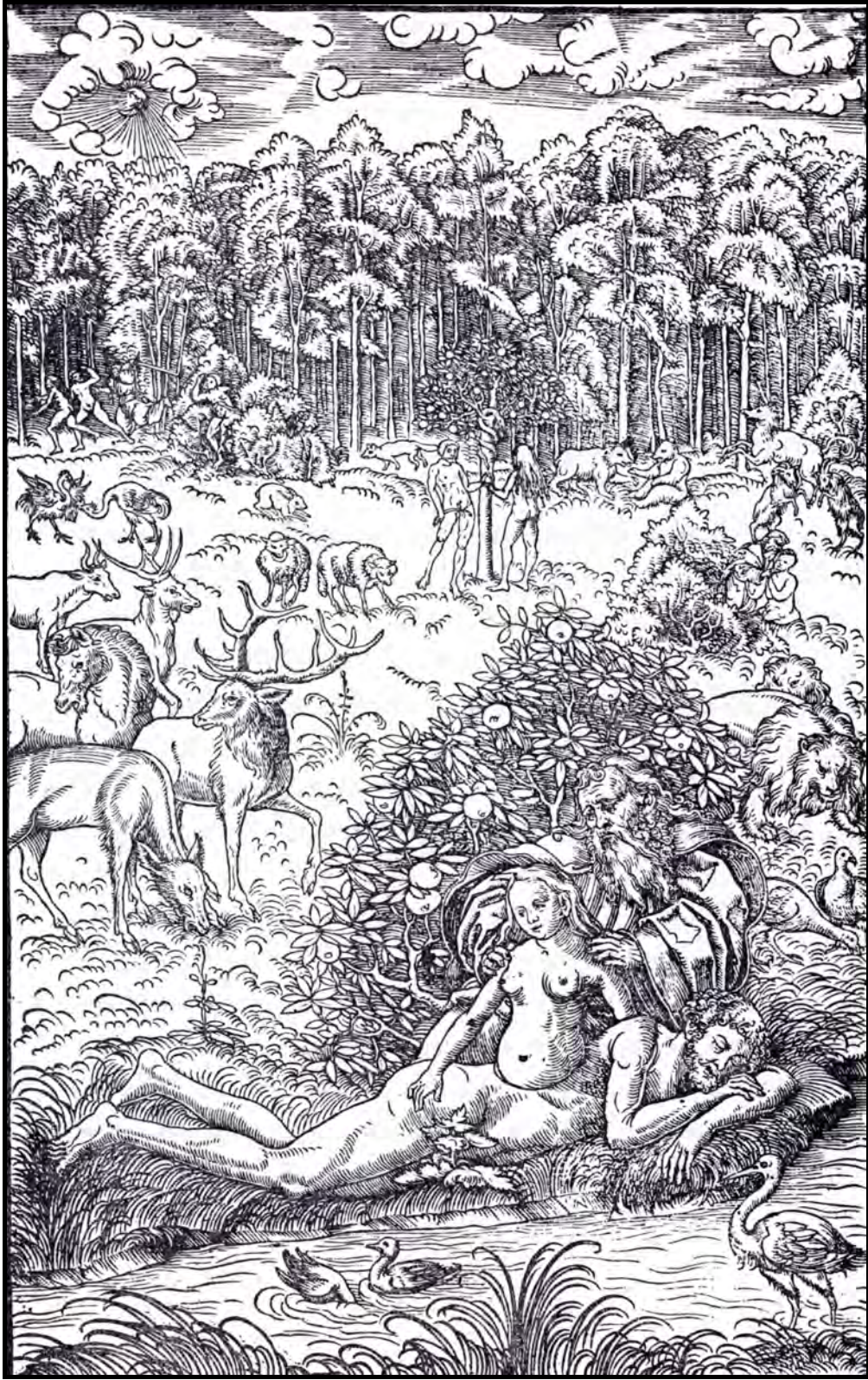
*is simply stronger; as a matter of fact, he isn't always stronger. Dominion itself is an aspect of the image of God in the sense that man, being created in the image of God, stands between God and all which God chose to put under man. As that which is created, man is no higher than all that has been created, but as created in the image of God he has the responsibility to consciously care for all that which God put in his care.” (Schaeffer, p. 48)*

This Biblical perspective maintains a careful balance between the worship of nature and the exaltation of the environment above the legitimate needs and purposes of human society on the one hand, and the destructive exploitation of the environment for short-term selfish gain, on the other. The world of nature has been entrusted to man's care. But nature is not an end in itself. All that which the Lord God made was fashioned for the use of man.

***“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.”*** - The threefold parallelism of this series of phrases serves to highlight the importance and the honor which God bestows upon mankind.



***“The Creation of Adam” by Michaelangelo***



*"The Creation of Eve" by Lucas Cranach the Elder - 1541*

The verb **“created”** is the core of this triple affirmation, used to assert this unique and unprecedented action of God. **“Bara”** is used throughout the creation account to signal events of unique importance. It only occurs three times in Genesis Chapter 1 - in each instance at a point of utmost significance. It is used in Genesis 1:1 to describe the original *“creatio ex nihilo”* of the basic components of the universe. It is used again in Genesis 1:21 to describe the creation of conscious life. Now it appears for the final time to describe the creation of man. In this instance, and in this instance alone, it is repeated three times for particular emphasis. *“It is as though God put exclamation points here to indicate that there is something special about the creation of man.”* (Schaeffer, p. 33)

**“Male and female created He them.”** - The text is careful to emphasize the equality of men and women as beings fashioned in the image of God. As will be seen in the details which follow, the ability of a man and a woman to live in love and commitment with one another is a crucial component of the divine image in which we were first created. The Hebrew terminology once again parallels English usage in that the nouns **“male”** and **“female”** as gender designations are not uniquely human. They are also used to describe sexual differentiation in other animal life forms. Raymond Ortlund summarizes the profound significance of this phrase for our understanding of human sexuality:

*“Line three boldly affirms the dual sexuality of man. We are male and female. Nowhere else in Genesis 1 is sexuality referred to; but human sexuality, superior to animal sexuality, merits the simple dignity given it here. Further, Moses doubtless intends to imply the equality of the sexes, for both male and female display the glory of God’s image with equal brilliance...”in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.”* (Ortlund, p. 97)

**“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and increase in number...”** - As with all the other living creatures, humanity’s capacity to procreate finds its source in divine blessing (cf. vs. 22). However, there is also a most significant difference between human reproduction and its animal counterparts. Unlike all the other animals, mankind originated with one single pair - one man and one woman. The additional information provided in Genesis 2 indicates that this was a deliberate part of God’s design as He institutes holy marriage (cf. Genesis 2:24). For humanity the generation of new life is intended to be the result of the love between a husband and wife, expressed in their sexual relationship with one another.

The intrusion of sin and the selfish distortion that it brings has, of course, wrecked havoc in this fundamentally important area of our lives - but God's intent remains the same.

This verse has often been used to prohibit the practice of birth control. It must be remembered that the text is primarily a creative blessing of God, not a word of command. To use this passage to require every married couple physically capable of having children to have as many children as they possibly can, misses the point of the text altogether. Alfred Rehwinkel correctly pointed out: "*Genesis 1:28 is a promise of offspring rather than an obligation to beget them.*" (Rehwinkel 2, p.53) The absolute prohibition of birth control as inherently sinful cannot be supported by Scripture. At the same time, however, it must be said that the connection between procreation and love in the Bible's understanding of human sexuality is profoundly important. The procreative possibility expresses the truth that our love for one another within marriage is to life-giving and unselfish. The arbitrary restriction or elimination of that possibility threatens to reduce our sexuality to mere pleasure-seeking - either by one partner or by the couple itself. Such pleasure-seeking is by nature non-



*"The Comforts of Eve" by Adelheid Salles-Wagner*

productive and selfish. In a 1981 study on “*Human Sexuality*,” the Missouri Synod’s Commission of Theology and Church Relations described the crucial importance of marriage’s procreative purpose in this way:

*“Men and women are called out of their loneliness into the fellowship of marriage. Yet their union might now turn wholly inward and become a purely self-serving one. This is not to be. The union of man and woman who in their embrace have excluded all third parties is to be a fruitful union. They are privileged to give life to future generations... Procreation is an actual sharing in God’s ongoing creative activity. We may even speak of the blessing as a kind of natural promise embedded within the creation; a sign and manifestation of the truth that genuine love is life-giving and fruitful...With the birth of a child, husband and wife, husband and wife come to share a common work. The birth of their is a public manifestation that this union of husband and wife is not one which turns inward, concentrating solely upon itself.”* (CTCR, pp.17-18)

The dire consequences of such selfishness in the exercise of our sexuality are evident throughout American culture today. Sociologist Maggie Gallagher argues that “*American culture is taking an historic turn away from children.*” (Gallagher, p.76) Gallagher sees this ominous trend as the consequence of three overlapping social movements which converged in the early 1970's:

*“The sexual revolution which viewed children as an unwelcome side-effect of orgasm; feminism, which in its virulent early form denounced children as an impediment to female power; and, the population police, who, just as birthrates tumbled, successfully promoted the view that children (especially the children of the poor) are a menace to adults’ survival...Today children have been demoted from a public good to a private pleasure. In the process a mother’s work has been transferred into a play activity, a hobby, like collecting model trains. Kids are supposed to be weird objects of gratification to parents, a bothersome nuisance to everyone else. You prefer to spend your money on your (noisy, smelly) kids. Me? I prefer a Ferrari.”* (Gallagher, p. 80)

The Bible views the gift of children as a great blessing from the Lord. The psalmists rejoice





*“The Creation of Woman from Man”  
Medieval Bible Illumination*

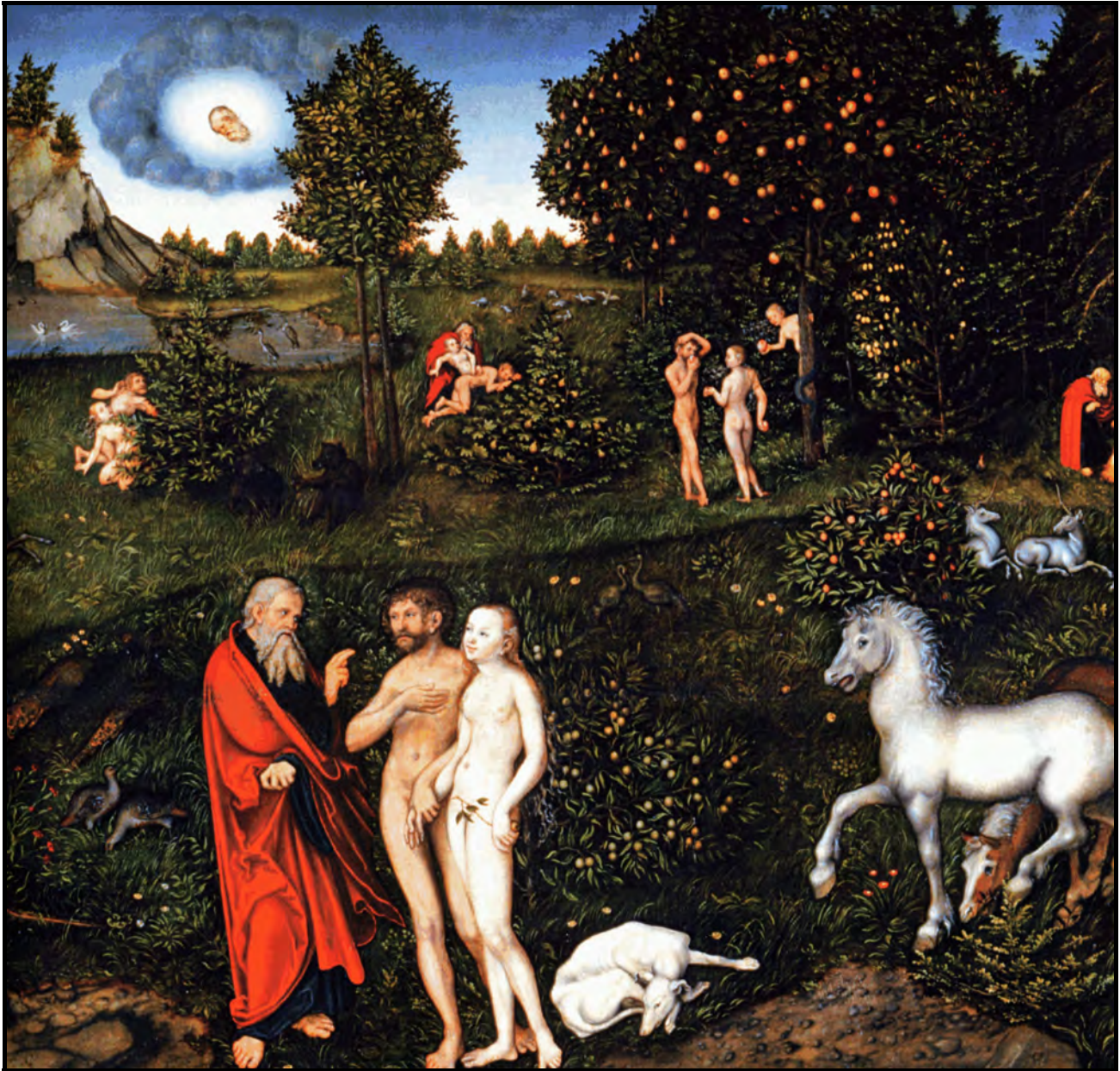
*“Sons are an inheritance from the Lord, children a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies at the gate.” (Psalm 127:3-5)*

*“Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and may you live to see your children’s children.” (Psalm 128)*

The responsibility of parenthood should not be undertaken or rejected lightly. Parenting is not easy. It requires dedication, self-sacrifice and perseverance. But the

selfish love of a father or a mother still provides some of life's greatest happiness. Many today have spurned God's plan for family because of motives that focus on economics, career, or simply personal pleasure. This is a perilous course. A life that is lived for self always results in loneliness and unhappiness.

+ + +



*"The History Of Paradise" by Lucas Cranach Sneior*



*“Lot’s Family Fleeing the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah” Luther Bible Illustration*

## ***Excursus - The Bible and Homosexuality***

The Genesis creation accounts make it unmistakably clear that the male/female duality is an integral and essential part of God’s creation of humankind. *“The suggestion here is that it is impossible to know the significance of our humanity without reference to the sexual differentiation between male and female.”* (CTCR, p.6) We are what God made us to be and what God made each individual to be is either a man or a woman. To seek to overturn or reverse that gender distinction either physically (by means of trans-gender surgery) or behaviorally (thru the practice of a homosexual lifestyle) represents defiance of the Creator and a perversion of His will. *“The male-female duality as the created pattern of human fellowship requires of us fidelity to our sexual identity, a willingness to be male or female.”* (CTCR, p. 33)

While homosexuality is clearly a matter of choice not heredity, such choosing cannot validate a behavior that is chosen in contradiction to the divine Creator and His Word. We, as creatures, can never be autonomous - that is, a law unto ourselves. We are inescapably responsible to the God who created us in the beginning.

*“Mutual consent or even genuine affection is not enough to justify a homosexual relationship. The human being is, according to the*

*Scriptures, more than mere freedom to define what he or she will be. There are acts or relationships to which we cannot consent without stepping beyond the limitations our Creator has set for His creatures (Romans 1:26ff.). Sexuality provides an excellent example of this truth...Mutual consent alone, even when joined with affection, cannot justify a homosexual union. An unwillingness to make such affirmations is part of a "flight from creation" which besets the contemporary world and contemporary Christendom. It ought to be resisted in the Name of the Redeemer who is also our Creator." (CTCR, p. 34)*

Accordingly, homosexuality is categorically prohibited throughout Holy Scripture. The Book of Genesis tells of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which were destroyed by the fiery judgment of God (Genesis 19:1-29). Homosexuality saturated and dominated the culture of these rich and powerful towns. The men of those cities (***"the men from every part of the city of Sodom, both young and old"*** vs.4) attempted to sexually assault Lot's two visitors the night prior to the cities' destruction. The very word "*sodomy*," historically used to describe homosexual intercourse, is derived from this sordid incident. The New Testament book of Jude reports that these cities were destroyed because of their ***"sexual immorality and perversion"***: ***"In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire."*** (Jude 7; cf. 2 Peter 2:6) In the Levitical codes of the Israelite nation homosexual intercourse was denounced as an abomination in the eyes of the Lord: ***"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable...Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled."*** (Leviticus 18:22,24; cf. also Leviticus 20:13).

In the New Testament, St. Paul includes homosexual activity among the wicked deeds of those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God:

***"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolators nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."*** (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; cf. also 1 Timothy 1:10)

Scripture's most detailed denunciation of homosexuality is presented in Romans



*“God’s Judgment Upon Sodom and Gomorrah” by G. Dore*

Chapter 1. In this section, the apostle is describing the progressive, self-reinforcing nature of sin. Paul presents homosexuality as *“the cultural culmination of rebellion against God...the most overt evidence of that degeneracy to which God in His wrath gave over the nations.”* (Bahnsen, p. 59)

***“Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with***

*other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:24-32)*

There are 21 vices listed in this remarkable passage. Homosexuality is no more sinful than any one of the other transgressions enumerated. It is, nonetheless, singled out for special attention and is clearly the most prominent sin in the text. The point which the inspired apostle is attempting to make in this passage is that all sin is rebellion against the Creator and defiance of His will. The sin of homosexuality demonstrates that point with unique clarity.

Dr. Greg Bahnsen offers this cogent summary of the Biblical view of homosexuality combined with a stern word of warning to our society and our church:

*“Consider, then, what God says in His infallible Word about homosexuality. It violates His holy law, represents a departure into abominable sin and shameless error. It is dishonorable, degraded, and depraved. These are not the judgments of some narrow-minded, uneducated, overzealous, modern-day crusader who is drunk with rhetoric. These are the judgments of the one, only, living and true God, whose holiness, wisdom and truth are flawless. Man, who was created by God in His own image, ought to reflect the purity of his Maker in thought, word and deed. When men and women wander into homosexual perversion, thereby failing to conform to the righteousness of God, they dishonor themselves and degrade their own persons...Not only those who perform acts of homosexuality, but also those who give approval to them have gravely offended the holy Creator. Certainly disciples of Jesus Christ and the overseers in His Church should be far removed from any attitude and teaching that consents to homosexuality*

*or effaces its sinful character. However, modern churchmen have instead learned to mirror the trends of the world. We should soberly conclude that modern society as well as the modern church are both dangerously close to divine retribution as they continue to tolerate and approve of homosexuality. "Gay Liberation" is symptomatic of a culture abandoned by God to destruction and a church provoking the Lord with abomination." (Bahnsen, pp. 59-61)*

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*"The Creation of the Animals" - Medieval Bible Illumination*

***"Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*** - The dominion mandate is repeated in Verse 28. Once again, all life on earth, summarized three broad

categories is placed under human responsibility/authority. The text adds a new verb to the instruction **“Subdue it.”** (Hebrew - “*kabhash*”). The root of this term means “*to knead or to tread upon.*” St. John Chrysostom finds in this mandate compelling evidence of God’s love and concern for mankind:

*“Do you notice all created things placed under the control of this particular being? So no longer entertain casual impressions of this rational being but rather realize the extent of the esteem and the Lord’s magnanimity toward it and be amazed at His love beyond all telling.”*  
(Louth, p.40)

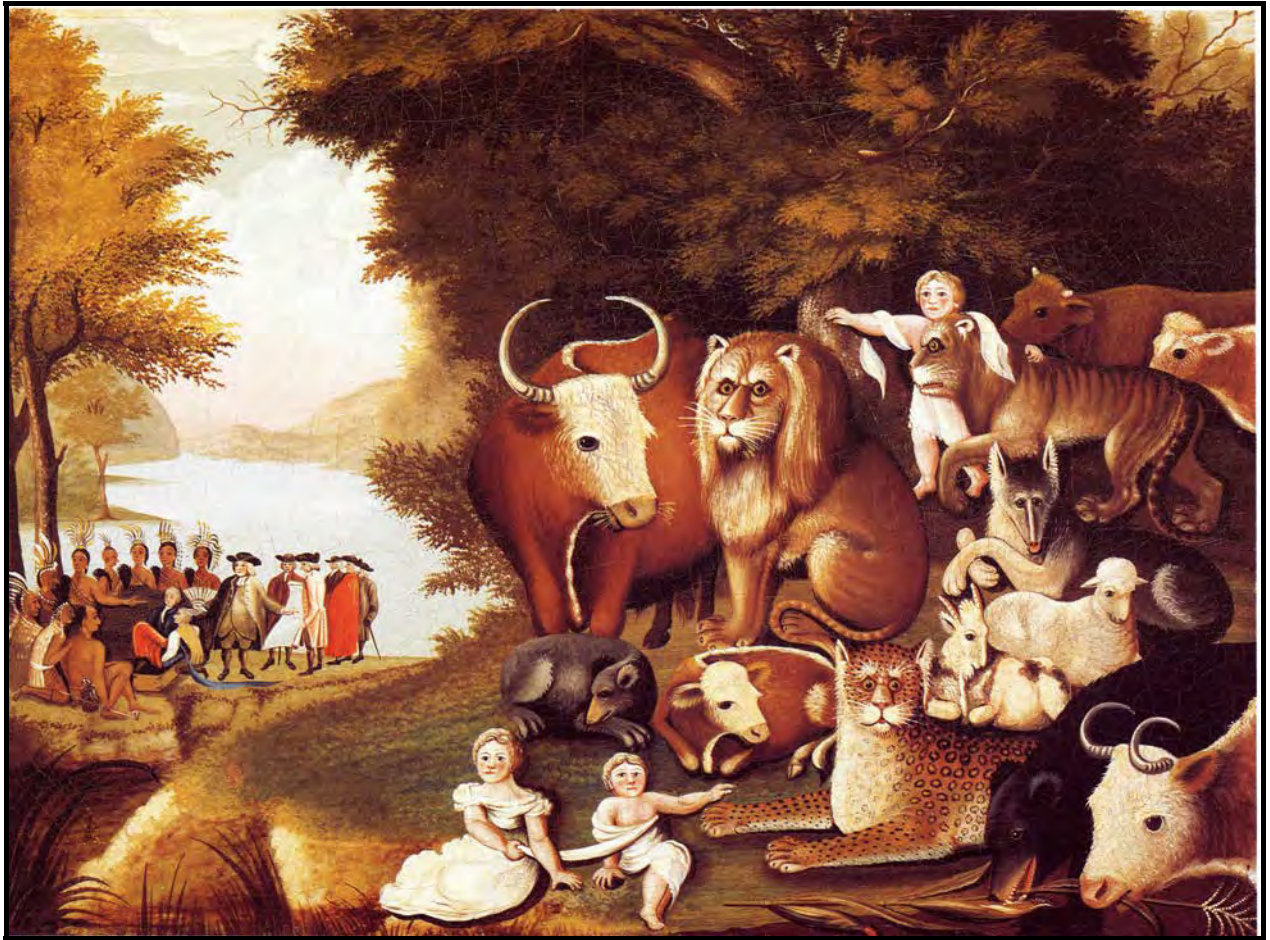
**“Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant...”** - Martin Luther contends that these words reveal God’s loving intent for life in His original perfect creation:

*“Here we see how solicitous God is for the man He has created. First He created the earth like a house in which he should live. Then He arranged the other things He regarded as necessary for life. Finally, He gave the gift of procreation to the man He had created. Now He also provides his food so that nothing may be lacking for leading his life in the easiest manner possible. Moreover, I believe that if Adam had remained in the state of innocence, his children would have run immediately after birth to the enjoyment of those delights which the initial creation afforded. But it is vain to mention these things; they cannot be acquired by thought and they are irrecoverable in this life.”*  
(Luther, AE, 1, p. 72)

**“Every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree with fruit that has seed in it. They will be yours for food.”** - God provides the plants of the earth, their seed and their fruit as food for man and beast. By so doing, He provides mankind with a profound lesson about the sanctity of life. Cassutto paraphrases God’s command as follows:

*“You are permitted to make use of the living creatures and their service; you are allowed to exercise power over them so that they may promote your subsistence; but you may not treat the life force within them contemptuously and slay them in order to eat their flesh. Your proper diet shall be vegetable food.”* (Cassutto, p. 58)





*“The Peaceable Kingdom” by William Hicks*

It clear from this passage that in the original creation God intended that neither man nor animals should eat other animals as food. The continuous struggle for survival which now characterizes the world of nature did not exist before sin came into the world. The vital role which predators now play in maintaining the balance of nature was evidently unnecessary before sin. In the original perfect creation it was as it will be again when the coming of the Messiah restores perfect peace and harmony:

*“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm not destroy on all My holy mountain.” (Isaiah 11:6-9)*

The prophet Hosea also foresees that great kingdom of harmony and peace. In language clearly drawn from Genesis chapter 1, the prophet writes: ***“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety.”*** (Hosea 2:18) Henry Morris notes that even today normally carnivorous animals can survive on a vegetarian diet if they are forced to and speculates that the meat-eaters claws and fangs may have developed after the Fall into sin:

*“As far as carnivorous animals are concerned, their desire for meat must also have been a later development, either at the time of the curse or at the time of the flood. Even today, of course, such animals can and will (if they have to) live on a vegetarian diet. Whether such structures as fangs and claws were part of their original equipment, or were recessive features which only became dominant due to selection processes later, or were mutational features following the curse, will have to await further research.”* (Morris, p. 58)

God did not extend to mankind permission to eat the meat of other animals until after the flood, although animals were used to provide clothing and for sacrifices before that time (cf. Genesis 3:21; 4:4).

***“The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.”*** (Genesis 9:2-3)

This dramatic change was symptomatic of the deterioration and destruction of the harmonious original creation. The flood marked the crescendo of that destruction as the original perfect creation was eradicated. The end of the flood marked the beginning of a harsh new world in which the rule of sin and decay was thoroughly experienced throughout nature. However, even when permission to kill and eat the flesh of other animals is granted, a poignant reminder of the sanctity of all life is included in the firm prohibition against the consumption of blood: ***“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.”*** (Genesis 9:4) This prohibition will later be institutionalized in the *“kosher”* regulations of the Children of Israel.



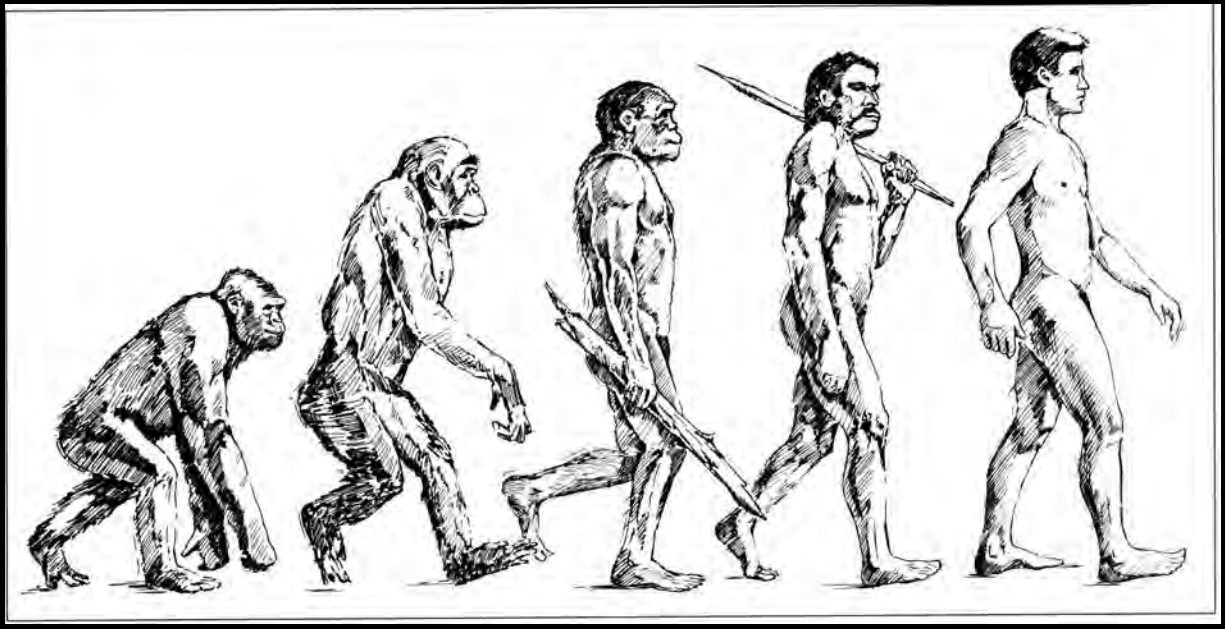
*“The Creation of the Animals” by Johann Teufel*

There are those who would carry this thought one step further and contend that even among the animals there was no death prior to man’s fall into sin. The text does not support that conclusion. Theologically the death of an animal is entirely different than the death of a man. Only human beings were created for immortality - to live with God in perfect harmony forever. Therefore death falls upon mankind as a curse - the consequence of sin. For living creatures that were not fashioned in the image and likeness of God death is not a punishment but simply a part of their natural condition. The same logic that insists that animals would not have died were it not for man’s sin would seem to compel us to conclude that those billions of animals which have now perished because of man’s sin will be restored to their original immortality in the new

heavens and earth. There is not one shred of evidence anywhere in Scripture that would support or encourage such speculation. Luther discusses the crucial distinction between the death of a man and the death of an animal in his commentary on Psalm 90:3 - *“Thou causest men to die, and sayest: “Return children of men.”*

*“This verse reveals in striking fashion that the death of a man is in countless ways a far greater calamity than the death of other living beings. Although horses, cows, and all animals die, they do not die because God is angry at them. On the contrary, for them death is, as it were, a sort of temporal causality, ordained indeed by God, but not regarded by Him as punishment. Animals dies because for some other reason it seemed good to God that they should die. But the death of human beings is a genuine disaster. Man’s death is in itself an infinite and eternal wrath. The reason is that man is a being created for this purpose: to live forever in obedience to the Word and to be like God. He was not created for death. In his case, death was ordained as the punishment for sin; for God said to Adam: **“In the day that you eat of this tree you shall die.”** (Genesis 2:17) The death of human beings is, therefore, not like the death of animals. These die because of a law of nature. Nor is man’s death an event which occurs accidentally or has merely an aspect of temporality. On the contrary, man’s death, if I may so speak, was threatened by God and is caused by an incensed and estranged God. If Adam had not eaten of the forbidden tree, he would have remained immortal. But because he sinned through disobedience, he succumbs to death like the animals which are subject to him. Originally death was not part of his nature. He dies because he provoked God’s wrath. Death is, in his case, the inevitable and deserved consequence of his sin and disobedience.”* (Luther, AE, 13, p. 54)

**“And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”** - Like an artist at the completion of his masterpiece, the Lord, as it were, stands back to gaze upon His handiwork. This is the seventh time the appreciation formula has appeared in chapter 1 (cf. vss. 4, 10, 12,18,21,25). This final occurrence is modified in three ways to emphasize the perfection of the completed work. First, it is applied to the whole creation rather than to the individual works of the sixth day - **“God saw all that He had made.”** Not only were the individual components of the creation, taken separately, good; but the creation in its totality, each part harmonized with the rest, was entirely good. Secondly, the Hebrew text uses an emphatic variation of the word **“that”** which literally means **“that really.”** The change expresses God’s enthusiasm as He contemplates all that which He has made. Again, the language is intensified as God declares all of creation to be **“very good,”** not merely **“good.”** Everything is now as God intended it to be in perfect harmony and unity. It is very good indeed!

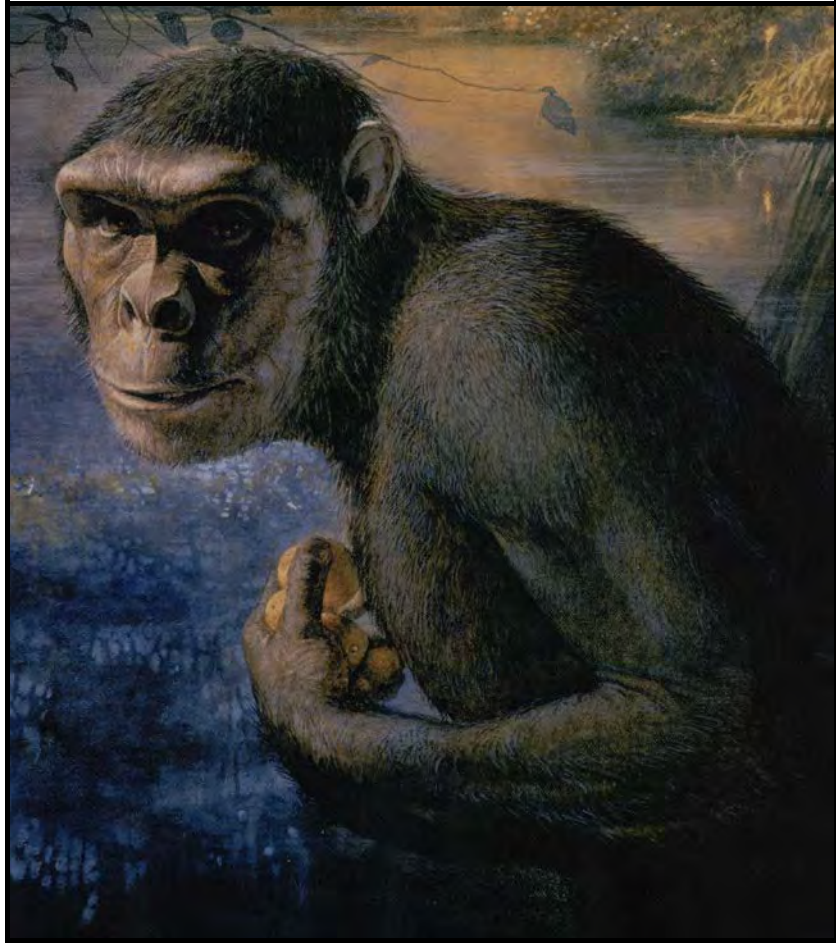


*“Typical Illustration of the Human Evolution” by Jody Sjogren*

## ***Excursus: Evolution and the Origin of Man***

Evolution teaches that life on earth began over four and half billion years ago in the form of the most primitive single celled algae and bacteria. Multi-celled life does not appear until 600 million years ago and the first vertebrates (archaic fish) do not evolve for another 130 million years (around 470 million years ago). The age of mammals dawns relatively recently, 120 million years ago, while the earliest primate, a small long snouted creature named *“Purgatonijs,”* (so-called because the few teeth which are all that remain of him were discovered in the Hell Creek formation at Purgatory Hill in Montana) is a real late-comer, arriving on the scene only 60 million years ago. In these vast, unimaginable reaches of time, the evolutionists tell us, random chance and natural selection set the stage for the appearance of the superfamily *“hominoidea.”* They contend that the members of this family - human beings, along with gorillas, chimpanzees, and orangutans - all diverged from a common ancestor, perhaps a primitive ape-like creature now called *“Afropithecus”* (*“African Ape”*) around 20 million years ago.

Within the scenario, the *“hominids,”* man-like apes which walked upright are the direct evolutionary ancestors of man. Evolutionists presently believe that the oldest hominid, *“Sahelanthropus tchadensis”* lived in central Africa nearly seven million

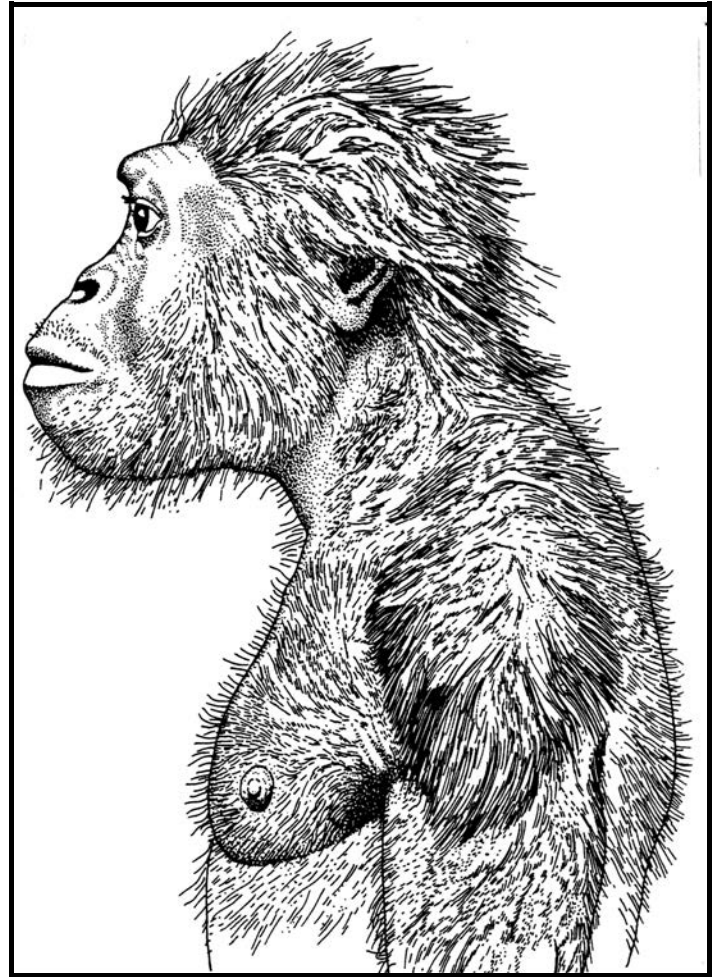


*“Sahelanthropus tchadensis” by Kazuhiko Sano*

years ago. The fragmentary fossil remains of this creature were recently discovered hominid, in the Djurab Desert of the contemporary African nation of Chad by Dr. Michel Brunet. Brunet is convinced that the appearance of the creature which he nicknamed “*Toumai*,” which means “*hope of life*” in the local dialect, marked the evolutionary moment when hominids diverged from our closest living relatives, the chimpanzees. Until the discovery of “*Toumai*” in 2002, the earliest hominids belonged to the genus “*Australopithcus*” (“*southern apes*”). Their remains have been discovered in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and South Africa. In 1973, Dr. Donald Johanson, an American Paleoanthropologist, discovered the bone fragments of a small creature in the Afar region of Ethiopia. He nicknamed his find “*Lucy*” because when the bones were uncovered the Beatles’ song “*Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*” was playing on the camp speaker system. About 40% of the skeleton was recovered, indicating that Lucy was about three feet six inches tall. She had the jaws, face, and brain of an ape. But Johanson contended that she was an ape on the way to becoming human because she walked upright. However, the evidence used to support this

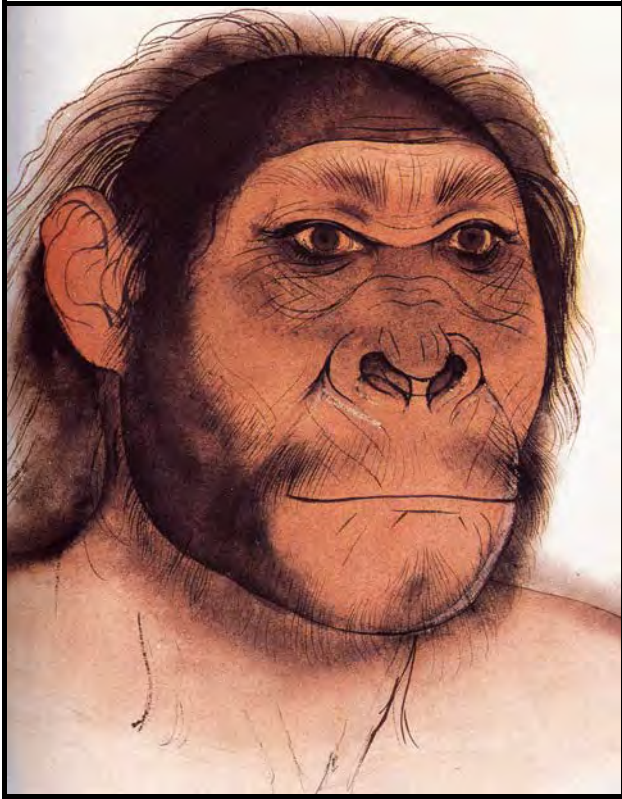
crucial claim was a knee joint found nearly two hundred feet further down and nearly two miles away from the remainder of the skeleton. Lucy's full scientific name is "*Australopithecus Afarensis*" (Southern Ape of the Afar). Her bones were dated to 3.2 million years ago.

Another hominid species uncovered in Africa is "*Australopithecus africanus*" (Southern Ape of Africa) uncovered at Sterkfontein in South Africa. This group of fossils is dated at 2.5 million years ago and typically have a "*broad, heavily built face, with prominent cheekbones and a prominent muzzle.*" (Burenhult, p.40) The remains of "*Paranthropus robustus*" (Robust Next-to-Man), found in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, South Africa, and Kenya are dated around 2 million years ago. These large creatures had huge jaws and massive teeth and for that reason are affectionately known as the "*Nutcrackers.*" The largest examples have a ridge of bone, a



*"Australopithecus afarensis"*  
*Reconstruction by J.H. Matternes*

"*sagittal crest*" on the top of their skulls to support their large jaw muscles. This closely resembles modern gorillas. In 1960, Louis Leaky came upon the fragmentary remains of what has come to be considered as yet another hominid species in the Olduvai Gorge. Further examples of this type were later found around Lake Turkana in Kenya. These fossils are dated to around 2 million years ago. They have been classified as "*Homo habilis*" (Handy Man) because the fossil discoveries were accompanied by scores of the most primitive stone tools. This was enough for Paleoanthropologists to shift these creatures from the category of apes to the genus "*Homo,*" that of man himself. This despite the fact that modern chimpanzees are also known to make and use rudimentary tools. Evolutionist Ian Tattersall, Curator of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, describes "*Homo Habilis*" and



**“Paranthropus robustus” by Maurice Wilson**

explains the controversy which has surrounded Handy Man’s role in human evolution in this way:

*“Despite the fact that it made tools, the life ways of H. habilis probably did not differ too dramatically from those of Australopithecus and Paranthropus. It remained small bodied and with primitive limb proportions...Its brain remained rather small, and its means of communication were almost certainly unsophisticated...One thing, though, does seem clear: the great leap forward in human evolution was yet to come.”*  
(Tattersall, p., 100)

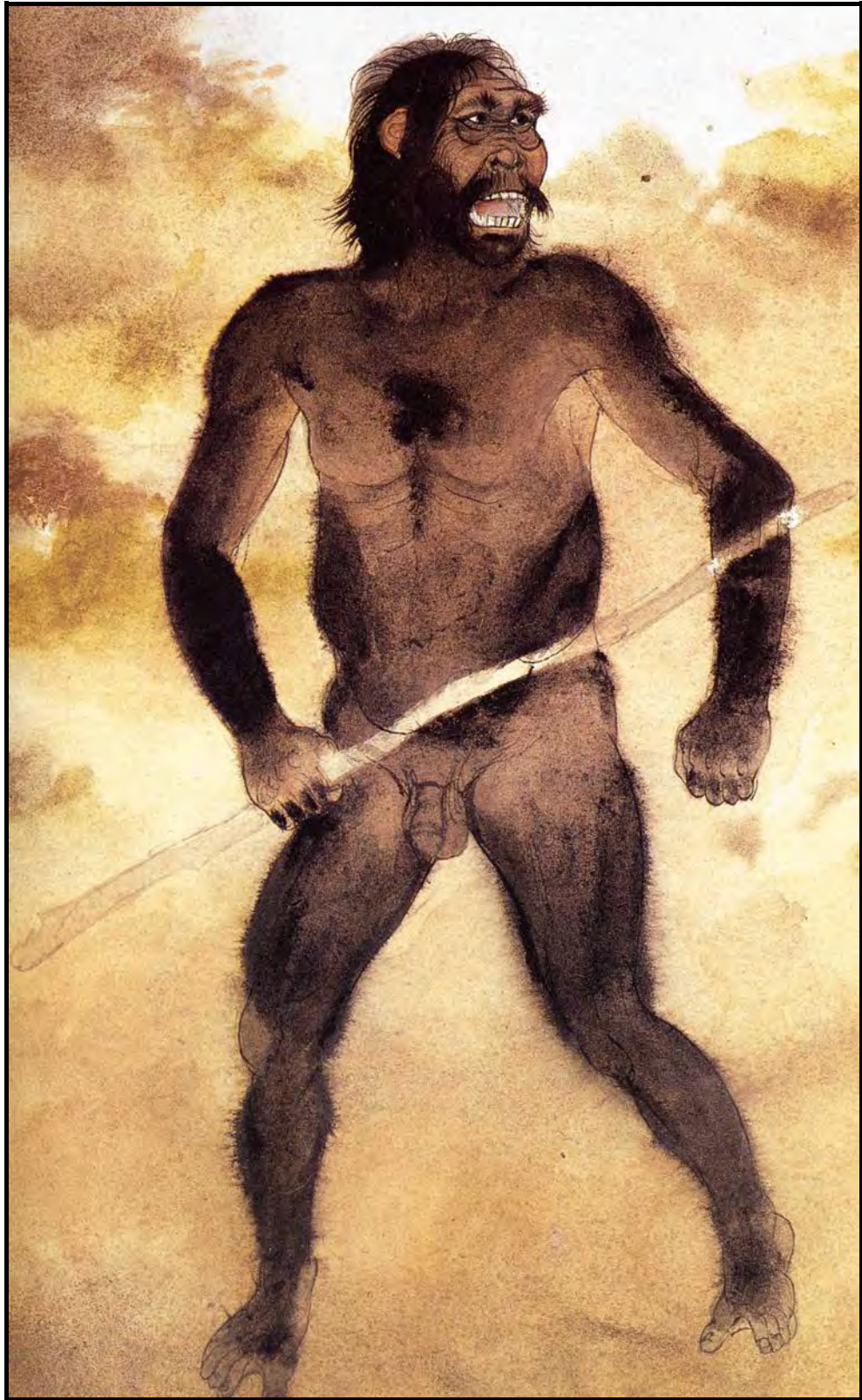
The relationship between these hominids and one another and their various roles in the evolution of man is hotly debated. There is not durable consensus within the scientific community. *Science News Magazine* offered

this humorous assessment of the predicament in a 1984 article entitled “*Whose Ape Is It Anyway?*”:

*“One sometimes wonders whether orangutans, chimps, and gorillas ever sit around the tree, contemplating which is the closest relative of man. (And, would they want to be?) Maybe they even chuckle at human scientist’s machinations as they race to draw the definitive map of evolution on earth. If placed on top of one another, all of these competing versions of our evolutionary highways would make the Los Angeles freeway system look like County Road 41 in Elkhart, Indiana.”*  
(*Science News Magazine*, Vol. 125, (June 9,1984))

These hominids bear some superficial physical similarities to man although the degree of that similarity has often been drastically exaggerated. Many contemporary species of apes also bear some superficial physical similarities to man. These similarities do not demonstrate or even suggest an evolutionary connection between apes and man. To assert that these are man’s predecessors in the process of evolution





*"Homo Erectus" by Maurice Wilson*

is an act of faith, not science. These so-called hominids are simply extinct species of apes. To style them as the ancestors of man is nothing more than fantasy.

Evolutionists proceed from the man-like apes to primitive ape-like men under the general category "*Homo erectus*" (Upright Man). One of the best known hominid fossil discoveries in history is "*Java Man*," uncovered by a Dutch Anatomist, Eugene Dubois, on the Indonesian island of Java in 1891. Dubois found a skull cap and three teeth along the banks of the Solo River. A year later, he found a thigh bone fifty feet away from the place where the skull fragment had been uncovered and assumed a connection between the two. He identified his discovery as "*Pithecanthropus Erectus*" (Upright Ape-man). Dubois announced to the world that he had identified the crucial transitional form in human evolution, the long-lost "*Missing Link*" which proved the evolution of humans from apes. Java Man was always the subject of great controversy and Dubois spent the rest of his life defending his theory, while jealously limiting access to the fossils themselves. Other discoveries in Indonesia ("*Wadjak Man*"), and the discovery of "*Peking Man*" in China in 1929 have tended to emphasize the similarities between these creatures and modern humans. Java Man is now classified as "*Homo erectus*" (Upright Man) and evolutionists are hard pressed to distinguish between him and his more contemporary counterparts. Dubois' dream of having found the missing link has not come true. He discovered the bones of a man, not an ape-man.

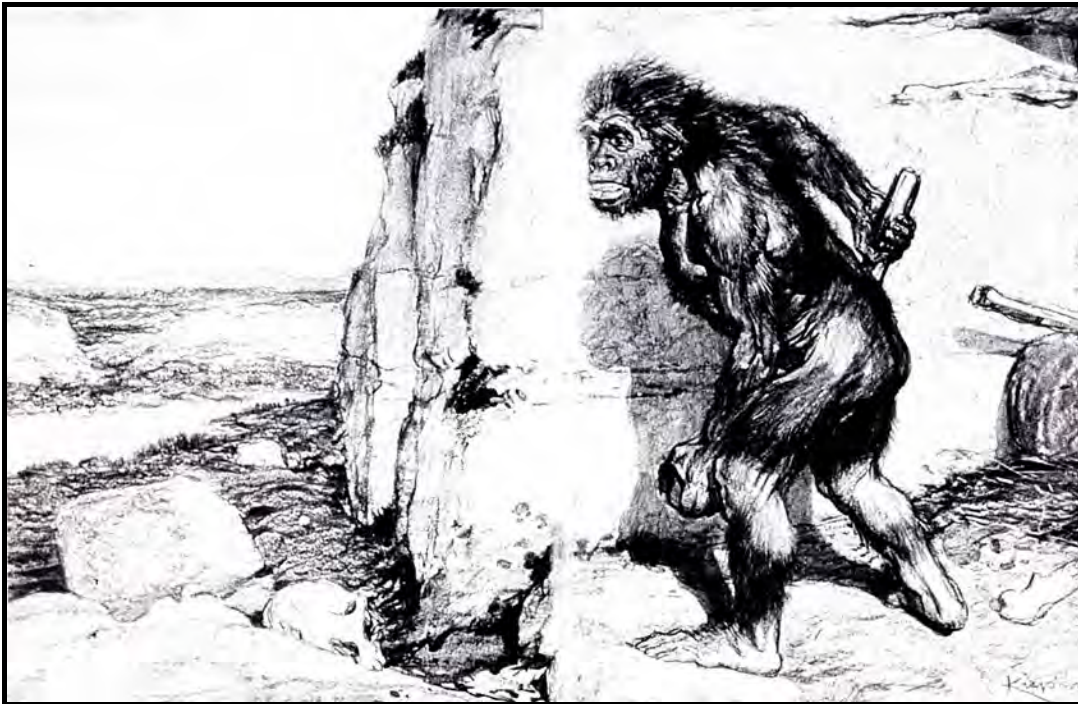
The 17<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran theologian and hymn-writer Joachim Neander (i.e. "*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*") was in the habit of taking long walks in a scenic valley near his home. Little did he know that his ambulatory habits would earn him immortality throughout the scientific community. After his death, his German neighbors named the valley after him, the "*Neandertal*" (English - "*Neander's Valley*"). In 1856, a fragmentary fossil skeleton was found in a limestone quarry in the Neanderthal. Similar fossils were later discovered in France, Asia, Africa, and Israel. These bones are the remains of a creature now called "*homo neanderthalensis*" (Neanderthal Man). In many ways the Neanderthal fossils indicated a creature that was fully human. In fact, their brain capacity was significantly greater than that of modern man. Their skulls are flatter than ours and some have heavy eyebrow ridges. The skeleton discovered in France appeared to be hunched over as if Neanderthal Man had not walked fully erect. More recent comprehensive study of the Neanderthal fossils indicates that diseases or pathological conditions like rickets or arthritis account for what had been characterized by earlier scientists as the "*primitive*"



*"Homo neanderthalensis" by Z. Burian*

characteristics of Neanderthal Man. Evolutionists argue over whether the Neanderthals are sub-human ancestors of men or an evolutionary variation which may have co-existed with early man but became extinct about 35 thousand years ago. Museum exhibits and pictures of Neanderthal men tend to depict them as stereotypical cavemen, with long arms, dragging their knuckles on the ground, stooped over with beetle-brows. This image is a severe distortion. It was introduced in 1911 by French anthropologist Marcellin Boule, who was loathe to conclude that evolution in England, as demonstrated by the discovery of the Piltdown Man (later revealed to be a hoax), had advanced more quickly than evolution in France, where the first Neanderthals had been found. He therefore banished Neanderthal from the human

family, reducing him to the level of a brutish ape-like creature. He gave him toes that could grasp for ape-like tree climbing, a bent kneed shuffle of a walk, and a curved spine that would have produced a permanently stooped posture. He declared to the world that this was a species in which one could clearly see *“the pre dominance of the purely vegetative or bestial functions over the cerebral ones”* and concluded that *“The like absence of any preoccupation with an esthetic or moral order accords well with the brutal aspect of the heavy, vigorous body.”* (McKie, p. 148) The fossil evidence was manipulated to conform to this view. However, actual Neanderthal skeletons



*“Boule’s Neanderthal” - 1906*

indicate no structural or functional inferiority. Their culture included the use of sophisticated tools and organized hunting. They buried their dead with meticulous care and attention. In one Neanderthal grave, for instance, a wreath of flowers was found, carefully arranged around the body. These folks were in no way sub-human. *Buried Alive - The Startling Truth About Neanderthal Man*, a recent study by Dr. Jack Cuozzo places the Neanderthal in the harsh post-flood world:

*“In this post-flood environment of western Europe with its hostile setting of cold, changeable climate, proximity to icy glaciers, completely new botanical conditions, and rugged terrain, mankind was probably*

*spending a great amount of time just trying to survive. Add to this the fact that animals and humans had decreasing life-spans and you have the makings of a small, very worried and nervous group of people who probably thought they should have stayed closer to the Middle East...The earth that their fathers had known was gone and newly created post-flood conditions prevailed...all these poor folks could find were caves to shelter them from the increasingly inhospitable weather.” (Cuozzo, pp.104-105)*



***“Cro-magnon Man” by Z. Burian***

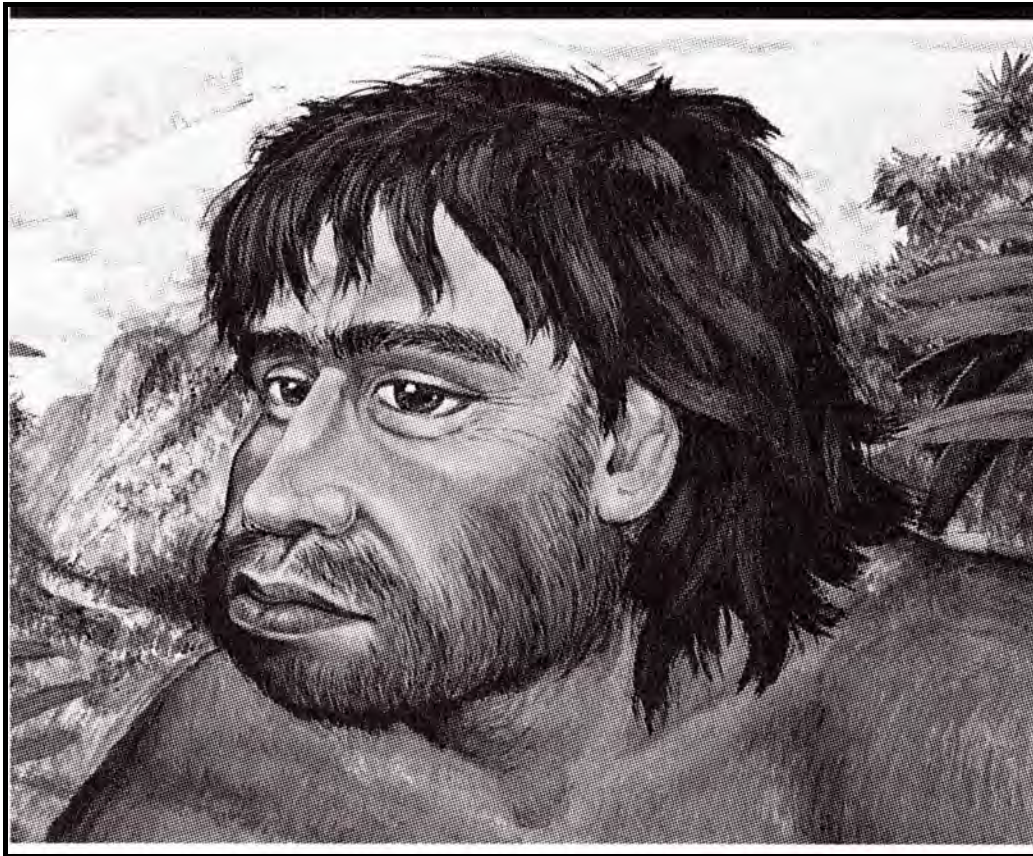
According to the evolutionary scenario, the figure at the end of the parade of human development is “*Homo Sapiens*” (Wise Man), often referred to as “*Cro-Magnon Man*” after the site in France where their earliest fossils, dated at 30 thousand years ago, were discovered in Europe. Recent discoveries in Israel have uncovered “*Homo Sapiens*” dating as far back as 100 thousand years ago.

The human fossil record has failed to furnish evidence for evolution. In fact, human fossil evidence has repeatedly contradicted the evolutionary scenario for the origin of humankind. Charles Darwin himself admitted to puzzlement and frustration because of the lack of significant fossil evidence for his theory. Writing in “*The Origin of Species*,” evolution’s originator wondered why the evidence that ought to be there, wasn’t:

*“But just in proportion as this process of extermination has acted on an enormous scale, so must the number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed be truly enormous. Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this perhaps is the most obvious and serious objection that can be urged against the theory.”* (Darwin, p. 292)

Rather than reach the obvious conclusion that the absence of the evidence indicated the inaccuracy of his theory, Darwin decided instead that the problem was “*the extreme imperfection of the geological record.*” (Darwin, p. 293). In the absence of such evidence, evolutionists have been forced to resort to speculation, circular reasoning, flagrant manipulation of the facts, and, on occasion, outright fraud to support their theory. To use the ironic description of Professor Marvin Lubenow, there has been a lot of “*monkey business in the family tree.*” (Lubenow, p. 33)

The most egregious example of outright fraud in the study of human evolution is the now infamous “*Piltdown Man.*” In 1912, Charles Dawson announced that he had discovered skull fragments and a jawbone in a gravel quarry near the village of Piltdown in England. His incredible find was taken to the British Museum in London. The bones were examined by Sir Arthur Smith Woodward, Curator of the British Museum of Natural History, and Pierre Teilhard Chardin, a French Roman Catholic anthropologist/theologian, who pronounced them to be authentic. They conducted further excavations at Piltdown and additional fossils were discovered.



*“The Piltdown Man”*

Dawson announced to the world that these bones were the remains of a creature combining ape and human-like features who had lived 500 thousand years ago. The creature was given the scientific name *“Eoanthropos”* (Dawn-Man). For nearly fifty years the scientific community accepted *“Eoanthropus”* as genuine, the crucial link in proving the evolutionary background of man. Only in 1950 was it discovered that the Piltdown Man had been a fake all along. Bones from a modern human skull had been chemically treated to make them look old and combined with parts of the jawbone of an ape in which the teeth had been filed down to the appropriate size. Close examination clearly indicated the scratch marks of the file. It took the England’s leading experts nearly half a century, during which time more than 500 books and pamphlets were written about the Piltdown Man, to detect the forgery. They saw what they expected to see and failed to observe that which they did not wish to see. In a 1991 evaluation of the Piltdown fiasco, Keith Stewart Thompson identifies Charles Dawson as the sole perpetrator of the fraud but goes on to note the complicity of the British scientific establishment:

*“While we can only deplore Dawson’s wicked forgery, it has to be*

*admitted that it would not have succeeded without the headlong acceptance of shoddy evidence by scientists who should have known better. As the W.C. Fields movie observes: "You can't cheat an honest man." Perhaps Dawson had the last laugh after all." (Thompson, "American Scientist" Vol. 70 (May/June, 1991), p.201)*

The Piltdown fraud is a relatively rare example of outright forgery. The widespread acceptance of that fraud and the five decades it took to uncover it, reveal a much more pervasive problem - the manner in which scant and inconclusive evidence is manipulated to "prove" the scholar's own preconceived notions. Yale's Dr. David Pilbeam candidly admits: "*The theories are fossil free or in some cases even fossil proof...our theories have often said far more about the theorists that they have about what actually happened.*" (Lewin, p.43)



*"Nebraska Man"*

The same pernicious pattern can be observed in the tale of Nebraska man. In 1922 a single tooth was discovered in western Nebraska. After careful study by Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, a professor at Columbia University and one of America's foremost fossil experts, the tooth was declared to be all that remained of a primitive man-like ape. He was given the official designation "*Hesperopithecus*" (Ape of the West). He came to be known popularly as "*Nebraska Man*" and was hailed as decisive proof that



man had evolved from the apes. “*The Illustrated London News*” published a picture of Nebraska Man, his family, and the tools they were using - all based on the discovery of one tooth. A few years later, additional bones from the same creature were discovered and it turned out that Nebraska Man was neither a man nor an ape. He was a pig! The tooth upon which the entire episode was based had come from a wild hog. A similar fiasco took place recently in Spain. A skull cap was found and declared by Spanish experts to be the oldest human fossil ever discovered in Europe. He as named “*Ocre Man*” after the village near which the fossil had been found. Subsequent examination by French experts demonstrated conclusively that the skull cap was that of a six month old donkey. Given the foolishness of some humans, perhaps there is an evolutionary link there after all!

The rise and fall of “*Ramapithecus*” further illustrates the pitfalls paleoanthropology. Dr. G. Edward Lewis uncovered fragments of a broken upper jaw in India during a 1932 expedition for Yale University. The name he choose for the fossils was “*Ramapithecus*” (Rama’s Ape) after the Hindu god Prince Rama in deference to the fossils’ original discovery in India. His finds languished in Yale’s Peabody Museum until 1961. At that time Dr. Elwyn Simons and his colleague Dr. David Pilbeam



*“Ramapithecus - Primitive Orangutans”*

advanced the position that Rama's Ape was a definitely a hominid with significant human characteristics: *"In addition to the hominid features of the upper jaw, Ramapithecus probably walked about on two legs, not four; used tools to prepare its food; hunted, and had a social life more complex than any ape."* (Lewin, p. 87). This view prevailed in the scientific community for over two decades until further discoveries demonstrated that Rama's Ape was no more than a primitive orangutan with no similarity to man. By the end of the "70's" scientists were ready to acknowledge that they had rushed to judgement on *"Ramapithecus."* In 1979, Natural History attributed this unfortunate incident to our eagerness to fill in the gaps, with or without the evidence:

*"Human nature abhors a vacuum, particularly a genealogical one. There have always been gaps in the fossil record of human evolution but never a shortage of speculative missing links...An entire Ramapithecus walking upright has been reconstructed from only jaws and teeth...The Prince's Ape latched onto the position by his teeth and has been hanging on ever since his legitimacy sanctified by millions of textbooks and Time/Life volumes on human evolution...The case for Ramapithecus as an ancestral human has been weak from the start and has not strengthened with the passage of time. Now that the molecular data are in, the mythical Prince's Ape, who would be man, has faded until nothing is left but his smile."* (Zihlmann/Lowenstein, Natural History, Vol. 88 (August/September, 1979) pp. 86-91)

A chastened Dr. Pilbeam admitted:

*"Perhaps generations of students of human evolution, including myself, have been flailing around in the dark...our data base is too sparse, too slippery, for it to be able to mold our theories. Rather the theories are more statements about us, the paleoanthropologists and the larger society in which we live."* (Pilbeam, "American Scientist" Vol.66 (May/June, 1978, pp. 378-379)

No Creationist could have offered a more penetrating critique of the manner in which the fossil record has been distorted and manipulated to conform to and support the theory of evolution. Harvard anthropologist W. Hill offers the same caution about the nature of paleoanthropology and its evidence:

*"Compared to other sciences, the mythic element is greatest in paleoanthropology. Hypotheses and stories of human evolution*



***“Man Is But A Worm”***  
***19<sup>th</sup> Century British Cartoon***

*frequently arise unprompted by data and contain a large measure of general preconceptions and the data which do exist are often insufficient to falsify or substantiate them. Many interpretations are possible.”*

Conclusions “unprompted by data,” to use Dr. Hill’s gentle choice of words, cannot, by definition, be science. Nowhere is the unscientific nature of evolution more clearly demonstrated than the study of the human fossil record. The evidence is not there - yet the theory is assumed to be true, by faith. What evidence there is is embarrassingly limited - “All that paleoanthropologists have to show for more than 100 years of digging are remains from fewer than 2,000 of our ancestors...an assortment of jawbones, teeth, and fossilized scraps.” (Colin Tudge, “*New Scientist*” Vol. 146 (May 20, 1995), p.24) *Time Magazine*

sympathetically summarizes the precarious dearth of evidence for current theories of human evolution:

*“Still, doubts about the sequence of man’s emergence remain. Scientists concede that even their most cherished theories are based on embarrassingly few fossil fragments, and that huge gaps exist in the fossil record. Anthropologists ruefully says Alan Mann of the University of Pennsylvania, “are like the blind men looking at the elephant, each sampling only a small part of the total reality.” His colleagues agree that the picture of man’s origin is far from complete.” ( *Time Magazine*, November 7, 1977, p. 77)*

Even when the evolutionist’s own time-line for the fossils is accepted, the results do not support any version of the theory of human evolution. Fossils indistinguishable from modern humans are now being dated to 4.5 million years ago. That means that “*homo sapiens*” walked the earth long before the “*australopithecines*” (the southern apes) who are supposed to be our evolutionary ancestors. The evidence does not conform to the theory! The fossils also clearly demonstrate that “*Homo Sapiens*,”



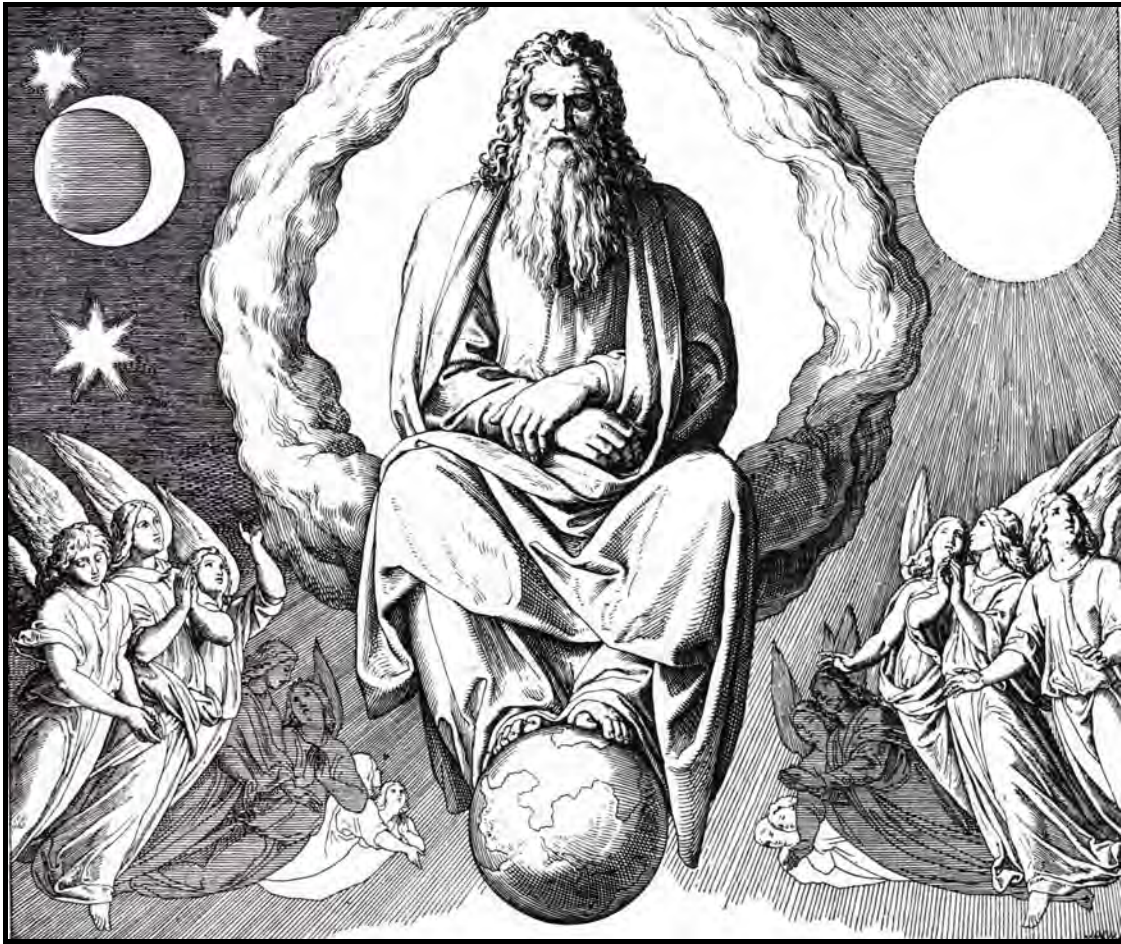
**Museum Presentation of “Australopithecus afrensis”**

archaic “*Homo sapiens*,” the various species of “*Homo Erectus*” and Neanderthals all lived as contemporaries in many places across the globe. It is not possible for them to have evolved from one another. The fossil evidence does not support the assertion of human evolution. Mary Leakey, one of the world’s renowned paleoanthropologists, admitted as much in 1984 when she said - “*I do not believe it is possible to fit the known hominid fossils into a reliable pattern.*” (Lubenow, p. 182)

Dr. Phillip Johnson, a law professor from the University of California - Berkeley, evaluated the evidence for evolution in a 1991 book entitled *Darwin on Trial*. He concluded that evolution is not grounded in scientific fact supported by empirical evidence. If evolution were a scientific hypothesis which actually required an objective study of the evidence, it would have been discarded long ago. Johnson contends that evolution is based on a philosophical belief called “*naturalism*” which rejects the possibility of God and therefore creation. Since evolution is actually a belief system masquerading as science, Johnson cautions that all assertions

of evolution’s scientific validity need to be received with a healthy decree of scepticism:

*“Descriptions of fossils from people who yearn to cradle their ancestors in their hands ought to be scrutinized as carefully as a letter of recommendation from a job applicant’s mother...The story of human descent from apes is not merely a scientific hypothesis; it is the secular equivalent of the story of Adam and Eve, and a matter of immense cultural importance.”* (Johnson, p. 81)



*“The Seventh Day” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Genesis 2:1-3***

*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.*

*“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.” - The first three verses of Genesis Chapter 2 form “a beautifully arranged conclusion to the account of creation echoing and balancing the opening verses.” (Wenham, p.34). The furious activity of creation has been completed and now there comes a pause. “Silence and stillness once again enter the atmosphere. The mood of the prologue now resurfaces in the epilogue. There is no activity, no noise, no speaking. All that God has willed and designed for His canvas of the universe is now in its place.” (Hamilton, p.141).*

The conjunction which opens the verse - **“Thus”** literally reads *“and.”* It expresses the idea of retrospect and links what follows with what has preceded. The break in the narrative suggested by the medieval chapter division is arbitrary and obscures the unity of these verses with those that precede them. The chapter divisions in our Bibles were added to the text in the thirteenth century by Stephan Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

**“The heavens and the earth were completed”** - *“The story of God’s work in the six days of creation has come to an end, and there now stands before us the complete picture of the heavens and the earth and all that they contain in their harmonious perfection.”* (Cassutto, p.61) The theme of this segment is finality. Four times it is emphasized that God has finished His work and three times the text stresses that this included all of His work. Everything was done. No revision, repair, or repetition was necessary. The time of creating and making was now complete. *“What Genesis allows for is not additional creation but procreation and self-perpetuation.”* (Hamilton, p.142) As wise King Solomon declared: ***I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it that men should fear before Him.***” (Ecclesiastes 3:14) The present processes of the universe, in the aftermath of the Fall into sin, are characterized by conservation and disintegration, formulated in the two universal laws of thermodynamics.

**“In all their vast array”** - Literally the Hebrew text says - *“and all their hosts.”* This phrase is most commonly used in two ways in the Old Testament; to refer to the stars and the planets (cf. Nehemiah 9:6; Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:6; Jeremiah 33:22); and, to refer to the hosts of angels (Nehemiah 9:6; 1 Kings 22:19; Psalm 148:2; 2 Chronicles 18:18). In this context the phrase refers not only to the stars or to the angels, but as the preceding words indicate, to the entirety of the universe - **“the heavens and the earth.”** The phrase also serves to express both the multiplicity and the harmony of everything which the Lord created. Like the soldiers of an endless army, each standing in the ranks in precisely his assigned position to form the perfectly order whole, the various components of creation are now in position-ready to function together exactly as God designed.

**“By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work...”** - The Hebrew text of these verses consists of three consecutive parallel lines, each of which contains seven words. Each of the three lines is divided into two parts, the first part ending in every case - like a threefold refrain - with the words *“the seventh day.”* Seven, as the number for

perfection and completion, is the dominant theme of the segment. The description of the seventh day is decidedly different from the description of the other six days of creation. On the seventh day, God does not work. The typical formula *“and the evening and the morning were”* also does not occur.



*“The First Sabbath Day”* by C. Gutherz

*“God had finished the work He had been doing...”* - The Hebrew verb *“kala”* means *“to bring to completion.”* The form in which it occurs in this phrase is often declarative, thus - *“God declared the work He had been doing complete.”* This understanding would be consistent with the rhetorical nature of God activity throughout the process of creation. Now at creation’s conclusion, once final time God speaks and declares the perfect completion of all that which He has called into being.

*“He rested...blessed...and made it holy.”* - Moses uses three verbs to characterize the activity of God in regard to the seventh day. *“He rested”* (Hebrew - *“shabath”*) means *“to stop or desist from work.”* In this instance, the work in question is creation. God stopped creating. He did not, however, stop working altogether. His work in

sustaining and preserving the universe continued. If it had not, everything would have immediately disintegrated into chaos. The “rest” of God comes to refer in Scripture to the security and peace of God’s people as they experience His protection in the land of promise (cf. Deuteronomy 12:10; 25:19) and ultimately to the eternal peace and safety of the redeemed in heaven (cf. Psalm 95:11; Hebrews 3:11). H. A. Brorson’s classic hymn “*Behold a Host Arrayed in White*” uses the term in that sense to describe the blessedness of the saints in heaven: “*They now enjoy the Sabbath rest, the pascal banquet of the blest. The Lamb, their Lord, at festal board Himself is Host and Guest.*” (ELH, #553) The magnificent words of St. Augustine say it well: “*Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.*” (Augustine, *Confessions*, 1,I). For that rest - the peace and security of living in intimate fellowship with the Creator and experiencing His love - we were created in the beginning in God’s image and after His likeness. No matter how much sin distorts and destroys, every descendant of Adam instinctively recognizes within the depths of his soul that our true destiny is to find the rest which can be found in the Creator God alone.

“**Blessed**” - God had previously blessed animals (Genesis 1:22) and man (Genesis 1:28). Now, at the conclusion of creation, the seventh day receives the blessing of God. The declarative sense of the Hebrew verb suggested above may also apply here. The text would then read: “*He declared the seventh day to be blessed.*” This declaration of blessing is the triumphant conclusion to the process of creation. It is God’s affirmation that all has been accomplished in accordance with His plan and purpose. By divine initiative, the seventh day will subsequently become the source of great blessing for the nation of Israel with the institution of the seventh day Sabbath. The observance of the Sabbath became an ongoing reminder of the reality of creation and of the identity of God as the Sovereign Lord of all that which He has made. “**And made it holy**” - To be sanctified, made holy, means to be set apart and separate. In the moral realm, holiness denotes separation from sin and its corruption. All holiness must come from having been chosen by the holy God and set apart by Him to be used in the manner He prescribes. The Sabbath is the first thing in Scripture to be sanctified. In this way, Genesis emphasizes the unique sacredness of the seventh day. The Sabbath day is set apart as God will later set aside for Himself a holy people. Each Sabbath observance became for Israel a reminder that they were a people set apart by God for Himself. The Holy Day, in that sense, exemplified the holiness to which the holy nation had been called by the holy God.





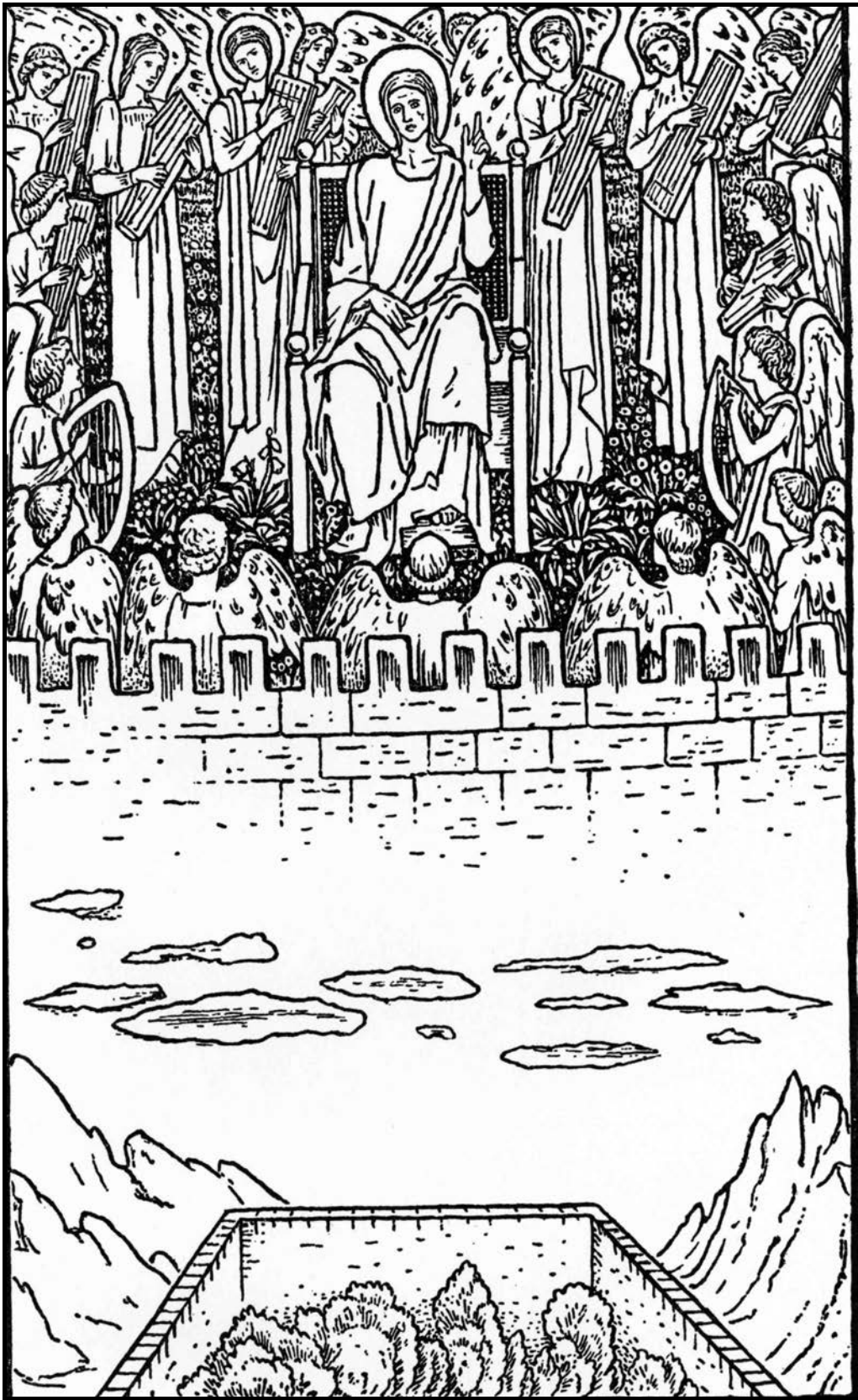
*“And God Blessed the Seventh Day” by William Blake*

The relationship between this text and the Sabbath commandment later given to Israel at Sinai (cf. Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15) has been the topic of considerable discussion. It is significant to note that this passage does not instruct Adam or his descendants to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. Nor is there evidence that they did so, prior to the Sinai commandment. A.T. Lincoln offers this helpful summary of the text:

*“Genesis 2:2-3 concludes the creation account, and does so in terms of God resting on the seventh day and blessing and hallowing that day. Elsewhere in Genesis 1 and 2 there are explicit commands for the first pair to follow. Not only is there no explicit command and no use of the term “sabbath,” there is also no mention of humanity. The depiction of the seventh day in the schema is solely in terms of God.” (A.T. Lincoln,*

Moses explicitly refers to the seventh day of creation as the model and foundation for the establishment of the Israel's Sabbath command in Exodus 20:11 - "***For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.***" (Cf. also Exodus 31:17) Later, in Deuteronomy's restatement of the Sabbath command, the observance of the seventh day Sabbath is grounded not in the pattern of creation but in God's deliverance of His people from bondage in Egypt. "***Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.***" (Deuteronomy 5:15). In both instances, God's action in the past becomes the foundation for Israel's observance of the seventh day as a day of rest, set apart for the Lord. It is then clear that Genesis does not institute or ordain the observance of a seventh day Sabbath as part of the order of creation. (cf. *contra* - Cassutto, p. 64) The Sabbath commandment was given to Israel and has been clearly abrogated by the New Testament (cf. Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 4:10-11). Luther is particularly forceful in his insistence that the Ten Commandments generally and the Sabbath commandment particularly be understood in their historical context as God's Law for the nation of Israel. "*God has not led the Germans out of Egypt...Not one iota of Moses concerns us.*" (Bornkamm, p. 124) The Ten Commandments are pertinent to the Christian life today only insofar as they express the natural law of God, written in the hearts of all men and reinforced in the New Testament.

In the perfection of Eden, a Sabbath commandment like the one later given to Israel, would have been superfluous. God would later promise His people that if they observed the Sabbath as "***a delight,***" they would find "***joy in the Lord***" and experience the fullness of His blessing (cf. Isaiah 58:13-14). Prior to the Fall into sin, Adam and Eve lived in perfect fellowship with God and experienced the wonder and the joy of His presence every day. In that sense, the Sabbath was given to serve as a reminder of the intimate harmony with God for which mankind had been created in the beginning. "*So everything about Adam's life before he sinned was precisely what the Sabbath laws pictured. In a sense, Israel's Sabbath laws were designed to show a microcosm of what life in Eden was designed to be. And this aspect of Moses law was*



*"God Blessed the Seventh Day" by Edward Burne-Jones*

*merely a ceremonial reminder of what God's original design for human life involved.*" (MacArthur, p. 186)

Thus, St. Paul speaks of the Sabbath as a **"shadow"** whose **"reality"** is found in Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17) Christ has restored us to that perfect harmony with God for which we were created through the forgiveness of sins accomplished by His death in our place on the cross. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews, quoting Psalm 95:7-11, specifically refers to the salvation won for us by Christ as God's **"rest."** (Hebrews 3:11-19). He goes on to assert: **"Since the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you will be found to have fallen short of it...Now we who have believed, enter that rest."** (Hebrews 4:1-13) The Sabbath observance of the Old Testament pointed forward to the realization of that true rest in Christ. With the coming of Christ and His accomplishment of the plan of salvation, it has been superceded. The **"shadow"** has given way to the **"reality."**

**"Because He rested from all the work of creating that He had done."** - The language of these concluding words closely reflects that of the opening verses of the creation account. As Cassutto notes, this phrase constitutes *"a truly magnificent conclusion to the section."*

*"Just as the prologue announces at the outset the main subject matter of the account that follows, so the epilogue looks back and epitomizes within the limits of one short sentence the content of the preceding narrative, reawakening in the heart of the reader, by means of the synthesis inherent in its words, the sentiments that were aroused within him in the course of his reading. A truly majestic conclusion to the section."* (Cassutto, p. 70)

### **Genesis 2:4-7**

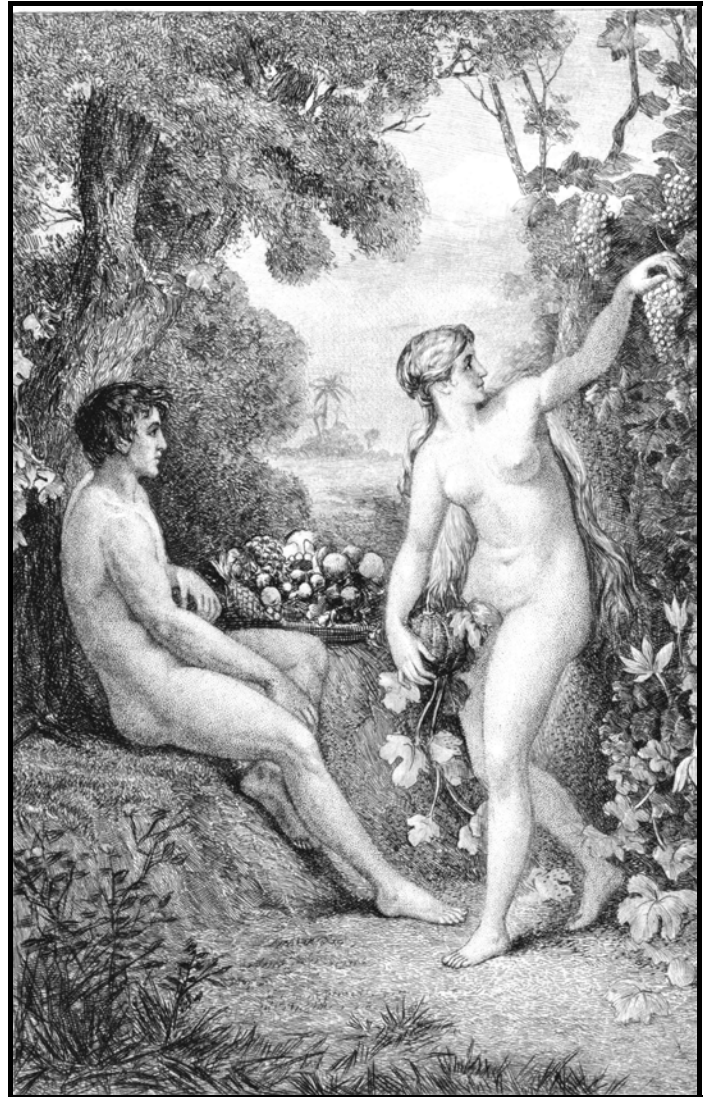
***This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth; and no plant of the field had yet sprung up; the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.***

***“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.”*** -

The sentence begins with the words - ***“This is the account of”*** (Hebrew - *“elle toledoth”* - literally - *“these are the generations of”*). This key phrase occurs ten times in Genesis (2;4 - the heavens and the earth; 5:1 - Adam; 6:9 - Noah; 10:1 - the sons of Noah; 11:10 - Shem; 11:27 - Terah; 25:12 - Ishmael; 25:19 - Isaac; 36:1 - Esau; 37:2 - Jacob). In each case the phrase appears to be the heading of the segment which follows. Many conservative scholars believe that these headings served as the titles of the original cuneiform clay tablets upon which the family histories which Moses used in composing the Book of Genesis were first written.(cf. Notes - pp. 6-7). This is the only instance in the series of superscriptions in which a proper name and a actual family history does not follow the formula. In this instance the subject of the segment is ***“the heavens and the earth,”*** the same formula used previously to describe the entire created universe (cf. Genesis 1:1). The absence

of a particular patriarch and his descendants here have led some to suggest that the term *“toledoth”* should be more generally translated *“this is the history of”* or, as the NIV translates ***“this is the account of.”*** However, using the family history language more broadly in this instance to describe the foundational events of man’s establishment in the Garden of Eden, his subsequent fall into sin, and the immediate aftermath of the fall does not appear to present a problem. It may be preferable to maintain the flavor of the original term, thereby also preserving consistency in the segment headings.

***“When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens...”*** - In the Hebrew text the



***“In the Garden of Eden” by Thomas Stothart***



*“Paradise” by Jan Van Eyck*

first words of the phrase literally read - “*in the day*” utilizing the noun “*yom*” which had occurred repeatedly in chapter one. In this context the term obviously does not refer to a literal 24 hour period (cf. Number 3:1; 7:84; 2 Samuel 22:1; Psalm 18:1). Some have argued that the figurative use of the term “*day*” here to describe the whole period of creation justifies a similarly figurative interpretation of the word throughout chapter one. This faulty suggestion overlooks both the immediate and the broad context of the word in chapter one. We are bound to the bare words (Latin - “*nuda verba*”) of the Biblical text - understood in their normal literal sense - unless Scripture itself indicates a figurative meaning. This basic principle of interpretation applies throughout human communication. Usage and context determine the meaning of words. A simple illustration demonstrates the point: “*Bea and Harold, who is a beekeeper, were engaged after to spelling bee, and because ‘B’ always follows ‘A,’ they will be married after the quilting bee next week.*” In that sentence, the sound “*be*” is used with six different meanings. some of which have absolutely no connection with one another, but every time it is used the context make clear exactly what is meant. The unusual conjunction of these multiple meanings illustrates the powerful role played by context in interpreting the meaning of words. In everyday speech our language carries out this task unconsciously and automatically. This is what is meant by the assertion that

the meaning of a word must be determined by its context. This principle is particularly relevant in dealing with the holy Word of God. It is impossible for the Bible to function as the source and norm of our faith unless the terminology and grammar of the Biblical text itself remain decisive.

The two phrases in Verse 4 - ***“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens...”*** - balance one another in classic Hebrew style. The latter restates the former. Most English translations, including the NIV, demonstrate an unfortunate tendency to overlook this fact and separate the phrases from one another. Cassutto’s translation better reflects the Hebrew parallelism: *“This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens.”* (Cassutto, p. 96) The typical formula - ***“the heavens and the earth”*** - is reversed to read ***“the earth and the heavens”*** to give particular emphasis to the symmetry of the two phrases . The only other instance of this reversal in the Old Testament is Psalm 148:14 - ***“Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His splendor is above the earth and the heavens.”***

After the broad account of the creation of all things in chapter 1, the focus now shifts to a more detailed description of the creation of mankind, the crown of God’s creation. Dr. Rehwinkel suggests that Genesis 1 had been originally been recorded by the patriarch Adam himself for his posterity. The *“toledoth”* heading at the beginning of this segment signals the beginning of a new tablet, whose historical references appear to suggest a somewhat later date of composition. Rehwinkel firmly rejects any suggestion of contradiction between the two chapters.

*“It is very obviously not the purpose of chapter 2 to give another account of creation in general, but rather, to supplement it and to describe in greater detail the creation of man, the crown of all creation. To introduce or lead up to this intended subject, the chapter begins with a brief review of the creation events, a detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve, a description of the Garden of Eden, man’s first abode, and the establishment of the institution of marriage. There is nothing in this chapter which is in conflict with chapter 1. Its purpose is not the same...Chapter 2 also serves as a bridge between chapter 1 and chapter 3. Chapter 1 speaks of the creation of a perfect world which had received the verdict of “very good” from its Maker. In chapter 3 we learn of the ruin of this perfect world and of the curse that was brought upon it by the*

*Fall. To show how this could have come about chapter 2 was necessary to provide the background.” (Rehwinkel, p.43)*

The second chapter, in effect, defines and explains Chapter 1's assertion that humankind were originally created in the image and after the likeness of God. Its intriguing description of Eden with the trees of life and the knowledge of good and evil, its detailed account of first the creation of Adam and then the necessity of Eve's creation as his helpmate, and the interaction which occurs between God, Adam and Eve serve to elucidate the basic components in the image of God - holiness and moral responsibility, the capacity and the need for love, and the ability to reason and communicate rationally.

**“When the Lord God made...”** - This is the first instance in which the names **“Lord”** (Hebrew - *“Jahweh”*) and **“God”** (Hebrew - *“elohim”*) are combined to form a



**“The Call of Moses” by Matthias Merian - 1630**

(The “tetragrammaton” - JHWH - appears in the fire of the burning bush in the upper left corner of the engraving.)



composite. “*Jahweh*” (English - “*I AM*”) is the personal, covenant name of God. This is the sacred “*tetragrammaton*” (Greek - “*four letters*”) from its Hebrew consonants “*JHWH,*” so holy that the Jews considered its mere utterance to be profanity. Its use denotes the intimacy of God with His people. Revealed to Moses at the burning bush (cf. Exodus 3:15), it discloses the nature of God as a God of mercy and compassion. Appearing to Moses upon Sinai, “*Jahweh*” declares Himself to be - “***The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.***” (Exodus 34:6-7). By contrast, “*God*” (“*elohim*”) is the more generic term for deity. It emphasizes the power and authority of God. In Genesis 2-3 this combination occurs twenty times. It is rare elsewhere in the Old Testament, appearing only sixteen times outside of these two chapters. Moses uses the composite here to stress the fact that the LORD (“*Jahweh*”) who has deigned to enter into covenant partnership with Israel is also the God (“*elohim*”) of all creation.



*“The Forests of Eden” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Engraving*

***“And no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the ground and no plant of the field had yet sprung up...”*** - These words describe the blissful condition of the earth and plant life prior to man’s creation and fall. The predominant word in verses 5-6 is the noun “*earth*” (Hebrew - “*adhama*”). It is used three times - “***on the earth...on the earth...from the earth.***” Its emphasis serves to prepare the way for the creation of Adam from dust of the ground in the verse which follows.

These verses are widely misunderstood. They are frequently cited by Bible critics as indicating that the creation of man preceded that of plants and vegetation. Critics pounce upon that perceived inconsistency as one of the most glaring contradictions between the two accounts of creation. (As if such an inconsistency could have escaped the notice of the numerous editors and redactors who are supposed to have created the text of Genesis!) On the other hand, in their zeal to defend the consistency of the text, conservatives have often argued that the verses are merely an expanded discussion of the third day of creation although they are hard pressed to explain why such a flashback would be necessary at this stage in the narrative (i.e. Leupold, pp 112 ff.). Both perspectives miss the point of the passage. The intended significance of these verses is indicated by the deliberate parallel between the vocabulary utilized here and that of Genesis 3. *“The purpose of this toledoth section is its depiction of human life before and after the garden sin; the condition of the “land” after Adam’s sin is contrasted with its state before the creation of man.”* (Matthews, p. 194)

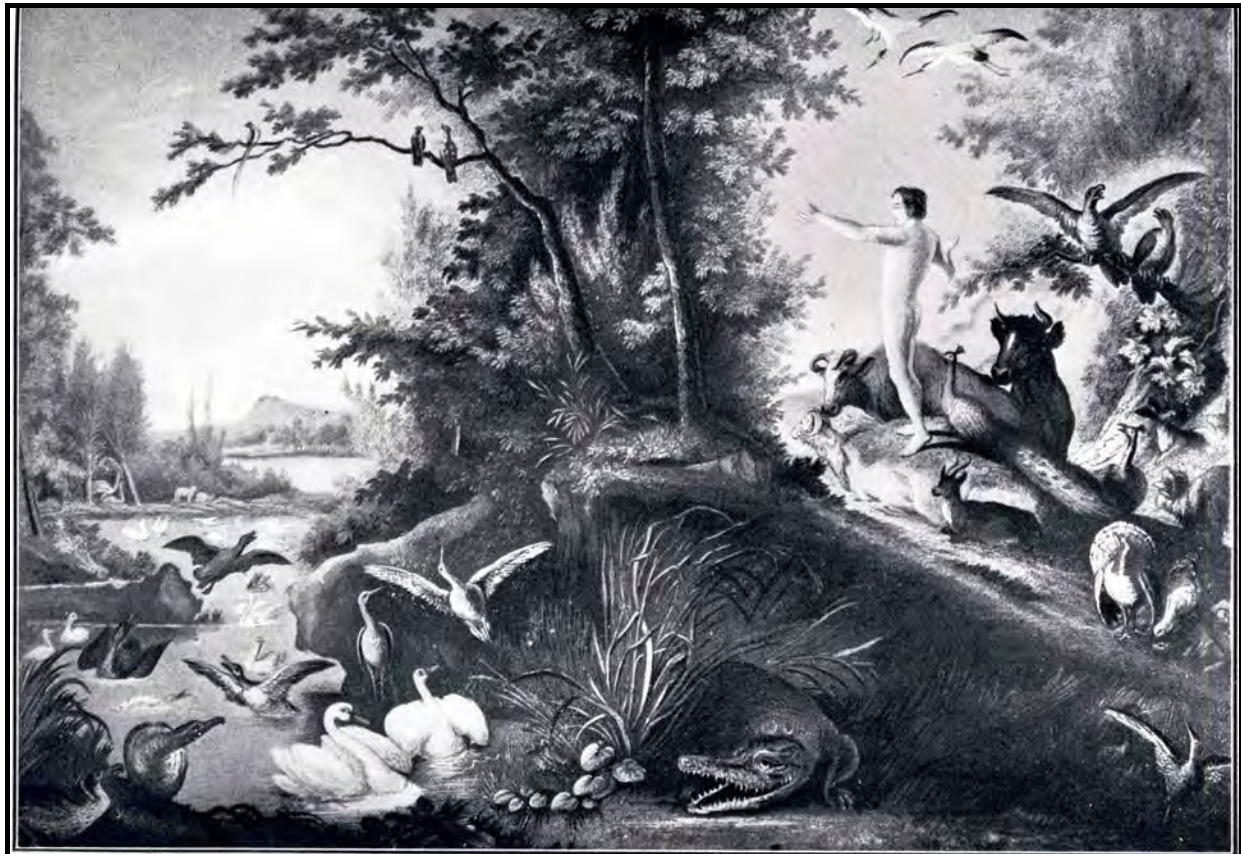
Two specific categories of vegetation are cited as absent amid the abundant plant life which God had created - *“shrub of the field”* and *“plant of the field.”* Their absence is clearly a temporary condition - they had not *“yet”* (Hebrew - *“terem”*) *“appeared”* or *“sprung up.”* These same two categories of plants are mentioned in Genesis 3:18 in God’s description of sin’s impact upon the earth and its plants. God warns Adam - *“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field.”* The Hebrew noun which the NIV translates as *“shrub”* is *“siah.”* - *“wild growth, thorns and thistles”* (Waltke, p.84). This term is synonymous with the *“thorns and thistles”* which are the penalty of Adam’s sin in Genesis 3:18. In the modern vernacular we might simply refer to such plants as *“weeds.”* The term *“plant of the field”* (Hebrew - *“esebh sadeh”*) occurs in both texts. It signifies the cereal grains from which bread is made, the bread that man will produce *“by the sweat of his brow”* (Genesis 3:19) as he is forced to *“work the ground from which he had been taken.”* (Genesis 3:23). The dual reference to *“of the field”* also points to the necessity of cultivation for survival which would replace man’s role as the caretaker of the Garden after his expulsion from Eden. In this way the text anticipates how the land will suffer from the effects of Adam’s sin.

*“The Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the*

*ground.*” - The text’s explanation of this contrast is twofold. Cultivated grains and the weeds which will hamper their growth do not yet exist because **“God had not yet sent rain on the earth.”** The allusion is plainly to the Flood, God’s punishment upon sinful mankind in the days of Noah. In the verses that follow, the Bible indicates that prior to the Flood, an entirely different, significantly more benign hydrologic system prevailed upon the earth which did not depend on the vagaries of the weather.

*“Man would have continued to enjoy these conditions had he remained free from sin, but when he transgressed, the Lord punished him by decreeing that the soil should obtain its moisture from above, so that He might requite man according to his deeds, giving him rain in its season if he was worthy and withholding it if he was unworthy.”* (Cassutto, p.104)

The earth’s first rain would signal the destruction of sinful mankind (cf. Genesis 7:4). The second reason why these particular kinds of vegetation had not yet appeared is the



*“Adam in the Garden” by John Elias Ridinger*

absence of man himself - ***“there was no man to work the ground.”*** Man, and his disobedience, would be the catalyst that would bring about these changes. In the pristine world that preceded his appearance, such things did not exist. At this point, the working of the ground was as yet not necessary. Nature in its own perfect abundance provided all that could be needed.

***“But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.”*** - The word ***“streams”*** (Hebrew - *“edh”*) is rare in Scripture. Its only use elsewhere is in Job 36:27 - ***“He draws up the drops of water which distill as rain to the streams.”*** The Hebrew noun is borrowed from the name of the Mesopotamian god *“Id,”* the guardian deity of the waters of the great deep. This link suggests that the word refers to *“springs”* that gush forth from the subterranean aquifers which Genesis calls ***“the springs of the deep”*** (Genesis 8:2). The primeval world was constantly irrigated by these springs which ***“came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.”*** To those who lived in the arid lands of the Middle East, whose very survival was dependant upon the sometimes capricious coming of the Spring and Fall rains, this consistent water supply was a marvel of abundance. The great rivers that flow from Eden evidently flowed from the same aquifer. The land of Egypt, *“the gift of the Nile,”* as the Greek historian Herodatus called it, with its reliable and plentiful water source in the annual inundations of the great river, was compared to the ideal situation of the primeval world. For instance, in Genesis 13:10, Lot chooses the Jordan Valley as his home because of its abundant supply of water - ***“like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt .”***

The present hydrologic cycle involves global and continental air mass movements, combined with annual and seasonal temperature changes. The cycle begins solar evaporation from the world’s oceans. That water is transported over the land masses through atmospheric circulation and returns to the surface through condensation and precipitation in the form of rain and snow. It returns back to the oceans through the earth’s rivers to begin the cycle once again. The Bible describes this system with impressive accuracy. For instance, in the book of Job, the world’s hydrologic pattern is used to demonstrate the wisdom and power of God:

***“He views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When He established the force of the wind; and measured out the waters; when He made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm; then He looked at wisdom and appraised it; He confirmed it and tested it.”*** (Job 28:24-26)

***“How great is God - beyond our understanding! The number of His years is past finding out. He draws up the drops of water which distill as rain to the streams; the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall upon mankind. Who can understand how He spreads out the clouds, how He thunders from His pavilion? See how He scatters His lightning about Him, bathing in the depths of the sea!”***  
(Job 36:26-29; cf. also Ecclesiastes 1:6-7; Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 135:6-7)

This cycle did not go into effect until the time of the great flood. In the original creation there was no rainfall on the earth. The earth’s daily water supply was provided consistently and gently by springs which flowed from subterranean aquifers and local evaporation and condensation.

***“The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”*** - The unique status of man is emphasized by the special care which God takes in his creation and the detail in which that creation is described. Later in chapter 2:19 the text indicates that the other animals were also ***“formed out of the ground.”***

Man is formed ***“from the dust of the ground.”*** The Hebrew word for ***“dust”*** is ***“apar.”*** It may refer to the loose surface dirt of the ground (cf. Exodus 8:16-17) or the powder of something that has been pulverized, like the dust to which Moses reduced the golden calf (Deuteronomy 9:21). The dust of humanity comes from ***“the ground”*** (Hebrew - ***“adama”***). Luther renders the phrase with the German word ***“Erdenkloss”*** - literally a clump of earth. The deliberate creation of man ***“from the dust of the ground”*** links man to the material world. ***“Human life is embodied life.”*** (Matthews, p. 196) Abraham acknowledges his unworthiness before God by declaring: ***“Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.”*** (Genesis 18:27) Man’s creation from the dust of the earth anticipates the curse of Genesis 3:19 - ***“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”*** (Cf. also Ecclesiastes 3:20) ***“Dust is the womb from which man emerges and the receptacle to which he will one day return. It defines the beginning and the end of his life.”*** (Hamilton, p. 158)



*“The Creation of Adam” by William Blake*

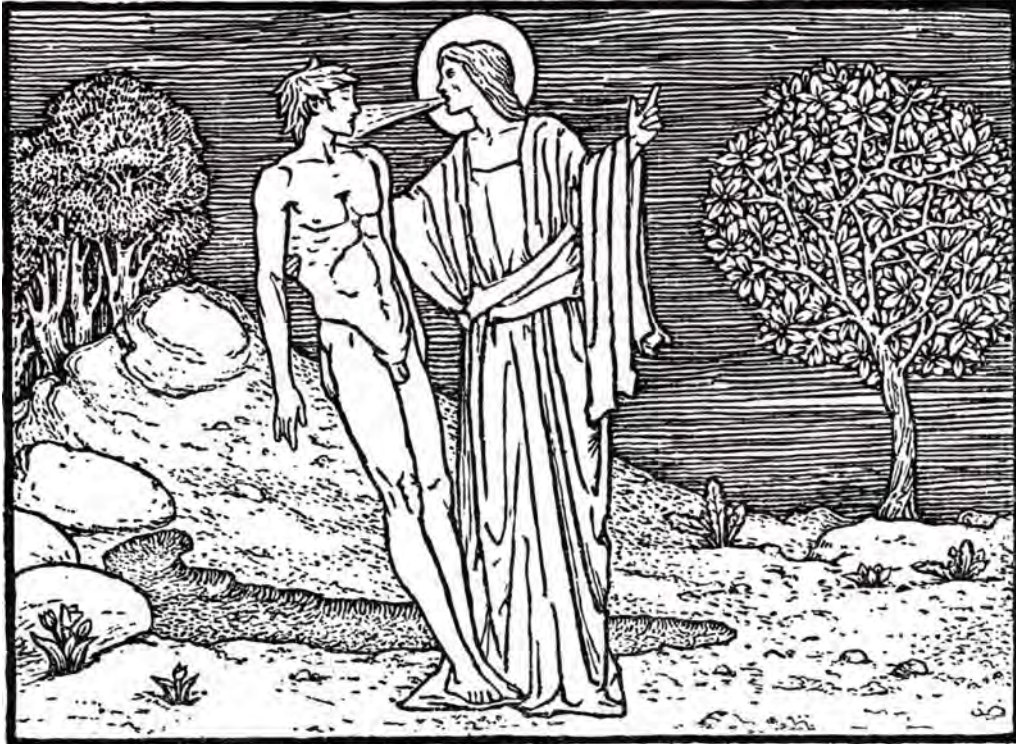
the word **“man”** (Hebrew - *“adam”*) is derived from the word **“ground”** (Hebrew - *“adama”*). The term can refer generically to humankind, or to an individual male human being. The word is also used as the proper name of the first human being. The first undisputed instance where the word is used in this sense is in Genesis 4:25. Adam is thus clearly identified as being of the earth - the earth/man. *“Man is related to the ground by his very constitution, making him perfectly suited for his task of working the ground, which is required for cultivation (2:5,15). Because of man’s sin, however, his origins also become his destiny.”* (Matthews, p.196) Paul effectively uses this concept to contrast the identity of the first Adam with Christ who is the second Adam: *“The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the*

*man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.”* (1 Corinthians 15:47-48)

The verb **“formed”** (Hebrew - *“yasar”*) refers to the hands of a potter molding the clay upon his wheel. The language here is clearly anthropomorphic - speaking of God in human terms. The prophets make extensive use of this theme in describing God’s relationship with man. Isaiah uses this image to reveal Israel’s presumption in complaining against God and questioning His will:

*“Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, “What are you making?” Does your work say, “He has no hands.” Woe to him who says to his father, “Why have you begotten?” or to his mother, “Why have you brought to birth?”* (Isaiah 45:9-10; cf. also Isaiah 29:16; Jeremiah 18:1-10; Psalm 119:73)

Dust and the potter’s clay are often linked in Scripture to express the fragility of human life and man’s dependance upon God - *“How much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!”* (Job 4:19); *“Your hands shaped me and made me, will You now turn*



*“And Breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life” by Edward Burne-Jones*

***and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?***” (Job 10:8-9; cf. also Job 27:16; 30:19).

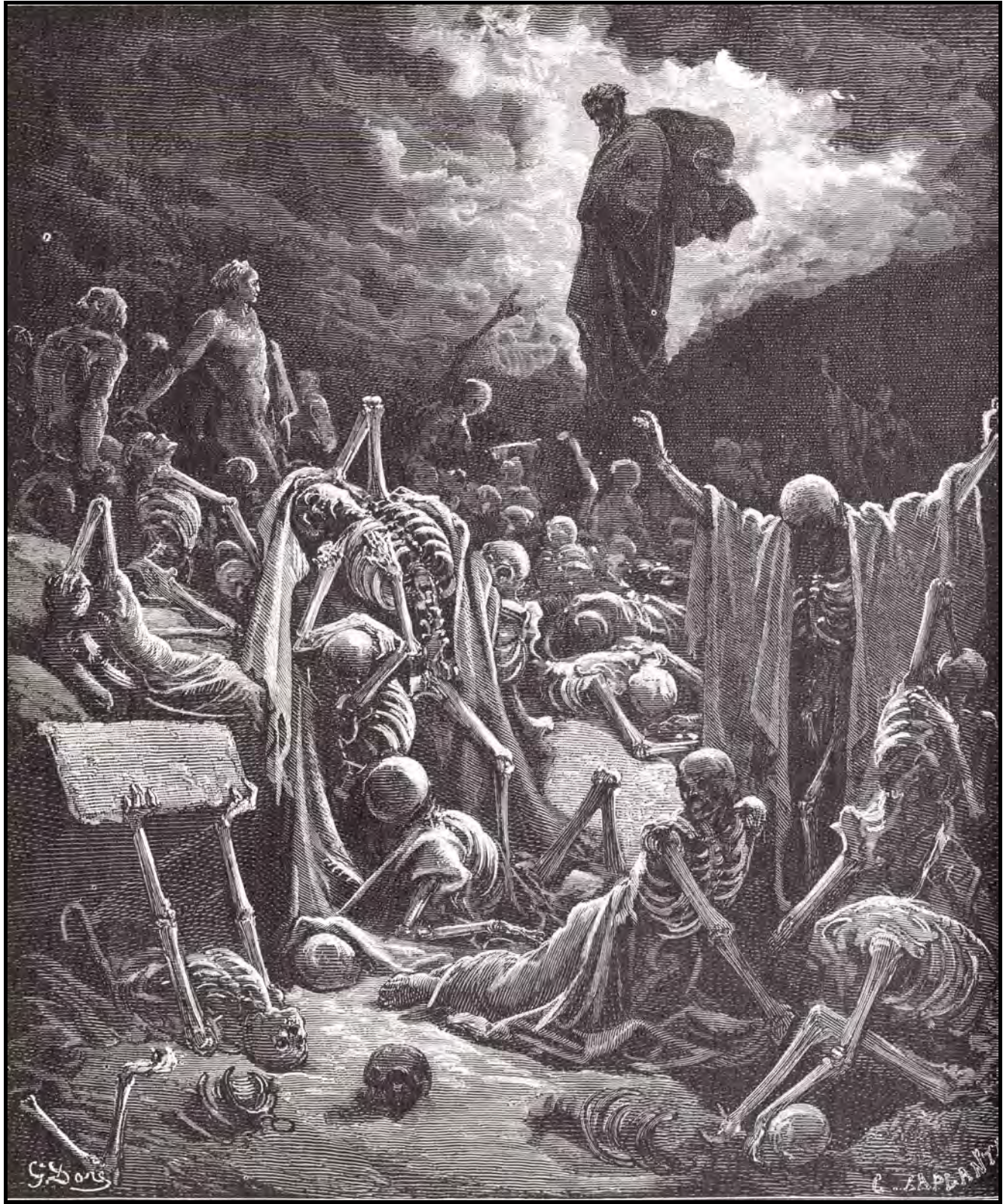
***“And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”*** - The lifeless clay comes alive by the breath of the Almighty. All life comes from God, the only self-existent Being and so the inanimate clay from which man had been formed now comes alive by the power of God. Man is more than mere earth. There is more to man than his physical reality. He bears within him the ***“breath of life .”*** ***“Breathed is warmly personal, with the face to face intimacy of kiss and the significance that this was giving as well as making; and self-giving at that.”*** (Matthews, p. 197)

The uniqueness of humanity is emphatically conveyed the intimately personal manner in which God bestows life upon Adam. In the book of Job, Elihu asserts his humanity in terms that clearly allude to this text: ***“The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of God has given me life.”*** (Job 33:4). Job announces his own resolve to be faithful to death with these words: ***“As long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness.”*** (Job 27:3-4) God Himself recalls this pivotal event in Isaiah 42 as He declares: ***“This is what God the Lord says - He who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.”*** (Isaiah 42:5) The same concept is graphically illustration in the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the dry bones. The bodies of the slain that littered the valley floor have been restored, but they do not yet live. God then commands the prophet:

***“Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy son of man and say to it: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain that they may live.” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet, a vast army...I will put My Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.”***  
(Ezekiel 37:9-10, 14)

***“And man became a living being.”*** - Human life originates at the instant in which the Lord God breathes the breath of life into the body of Adam. Man becomes a ***“living being”*** (Hebrew - *“nephesh hayya”*). As previously noted (Genesis 1:20), this is the same phrase used in reference to all forms of animal life. It is not man’s





*"Ezekiel in the Valley of the Dry Bones" by Gustav Dore*

possession of the breath of life or his status as a living creature that differentiates him from the animals. Man's uniqueness rests solely in the fact that he was created in the image and after the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The Biblical view of man expressed here is of profound importance. The modern materialist contends that man is simply an interesting combination of chemicals and electrical impulses. The classical Greeks - Socrates, Plato, Aristotle - insisted that man is a soul imprisoned in a body. Scripture clearly rejects both of these views. To disparage the body or deny the soul is contrary to Scripture. The Bible affirms that man is a vital combination of body and soul - a being both physical and spiritual, whose two dimensions were created to be inseparable from one another. Man's instinctive fear of death is an expression of his natural horror at the prospect of the unnatural separation of the body and the soul.



*"The Creation of Humankind" by Rudolf Schäfer*



*“The Tree of Life” by Edward Burne-Jones*

### ***Genesis 2:8-17***

*Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the East, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground - trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden, and from there it divided; it had four headstreams. The name of the first is Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

*“Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the East, in Eden...”* - God prepares a home for man. In the midst of a perfect world, God provides a perfect place for man to dwell. The text stresses God’s initiative in this matter. Man does not choose or build his own home. It is God who plants the garden.

*“A constant in this passage is the bounty of God’s goodness to His special creation through a beautifully complete environment with luscious verdant herbage and a land rich in water and precious stones. Eden’s glittering garden was left to human supervision as his divine charge and partnership in the exercise of earthly dominion.”*  
(Matthews, p. 200)

**“Garden,”** the Hebrew noun *“gan,”* comes from a root which means *“to be enclosed, fenced off, protected.”* This is a place set apart by God, a place blessed with special and unique abundance. In translating the text into Greek, the Septuagint borrowed the Persian word *“paradeisos,”* which refers to the luxurious walled garden of a king. This word has, in turn, been transliterated into the English noun *“paradise.”* In the New Testament, our Lord used the word from the cross to promise the penitent thief a place in heaven - ***“Today you will be with Me in paradise.”*** (Cf. also 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7). The transformation of this term into a designation for heaven serves to express the theological truth that the eternity which God has prepared for His people in Christ will be a restoration of man’s original home in Eden. The prophet Isaiah anticipates this change when he promises the God will comfort and restore Zion - ***“He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.”*** (Isaiah 51:3)

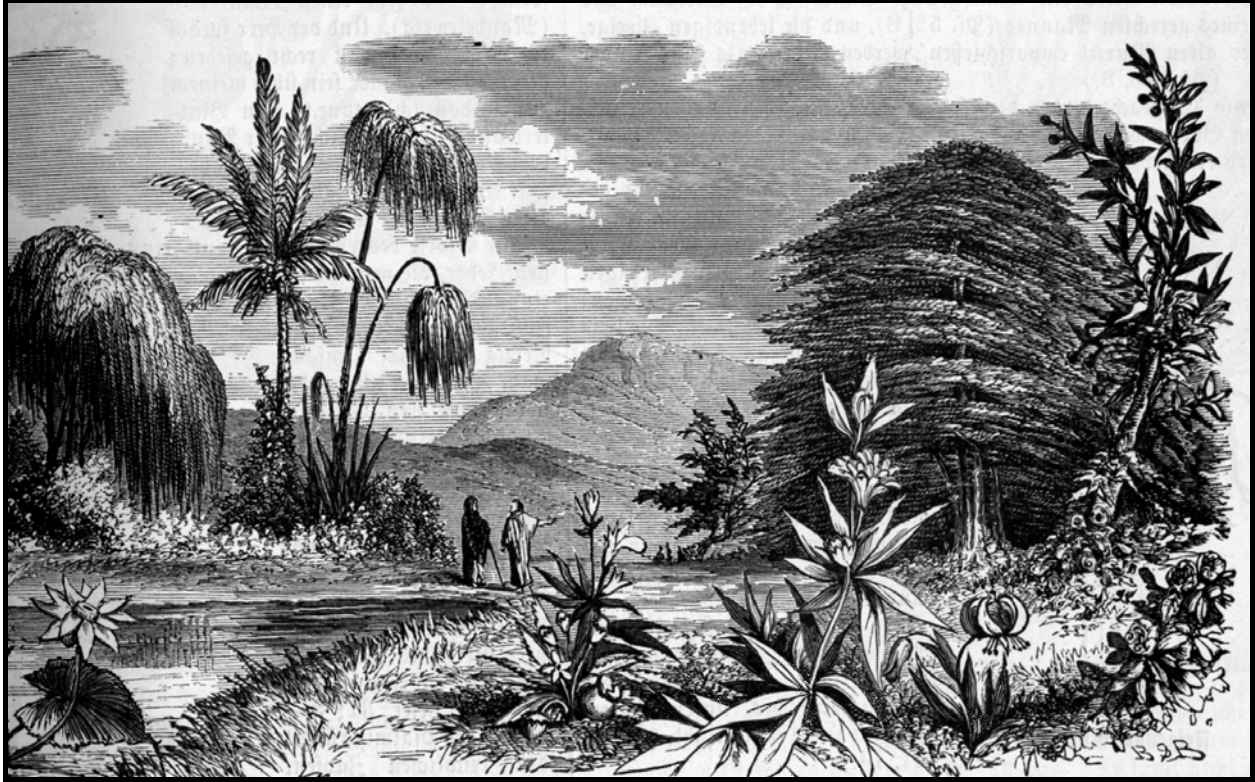
The text indicates that the garden is ***“in the East, in Eden.”*** Later the language will shift to the more familiar ***“Garden of Eden”*** in Genesis 2:15 and 3:23-24. However, this initial reference distinguishes between Eden and the garden that was located there. This suggests that ***“Eden”*** was itself a geographical location of which the garden was only a part. Similar language is found in Genesis 4:16 which reports that Cain was exiled to the land of Nod, ***“east of Eden.”*** The directional indication ***“in the East”*** is presumably from the perspective of the author in Israel. East is the direction of the rising sun, representing life and light in the symbolism of many world religions. West, the direction of the setting sun, often signifies darkness and death. An illustration of this symbolism in Near Eastern thought can be seen in ancient Egypt, where the temples of all of the gods and goddesses of life were built on the east bank of the Nile, while the tombs of the necropolis (city of the dead) and the temples of the Lords of the Underworld were constructed on the West bank of the river. Ezekiel utilized this imagery to herald the return of God’s *“shekinah”* glory to the temple in



*“Basil the Great” by Francisco de Herrera*

Jerusalem: *“And I saw the glory of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with His glory...The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east.”* (Ezekiel 43:2,4) Thus the Hebrew tradition that when the Messiah comes, He will enter the temple through the eastern gate. The historic eastern orientation of Christian churches, with its placement of the altar in the east end of the church, also reflects this symbolism. Basil the Great, fourth century bishop of Caesarea and champion of the orthodox faith at the Council of Nicea, explicitly links this Christian tradition to the Garden of Eden. *“For this reason we all look to the east in our prayers, but few know that it is because we are seeking our ancient fatherland which God planted in Eden, toward the east.”* (NPNF, Vol.8, p. 42)

*“Eden”* in Hebrew means *“a place of abundant waters.”* As a common noun it means *“delight or pleasure.”* This is a place designed by God specifically for man - *“and there He put the man He had formed.”* God did not fashion the garden as His own dwelling place. Eden is the place where God meets man.



*“The Cedars of Lebanon” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving*

*“And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground - trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.”* - After the general statement in the preceding verse, there now follows a detailed account of God’s preparation of the garden of Eden. This text is clearly not a reference to the creation of new plant species but rather a description of God’s action in selecting and arranging the trees and plants of the garden. Both the variety and the abundance of the flora in Eden are emphasized. It plants were chosen not only for their productivity but for their beauty. *“This orchard is both aesthetically pleasing and practical. Life in the garden is represented as a banqueting table - good for food and delightful to the eye. Humanity had no need to eat of the forbidden fruit.”* (Waltke, p. 86) John of Damascus, a leading theologian and teacher of the church in the sixth century, describes the wonder of Eden - *“a treasure house of every joy and pleasure”* - in these words:

*“Since God intended to fashion man after His own image and likeness from the visible and invisible creation to be a sort of king and ruler over the whole earth and all things in it, He prepared a sort of kingdom for him in which he might dwell and lead a blessed and blissful life. And*

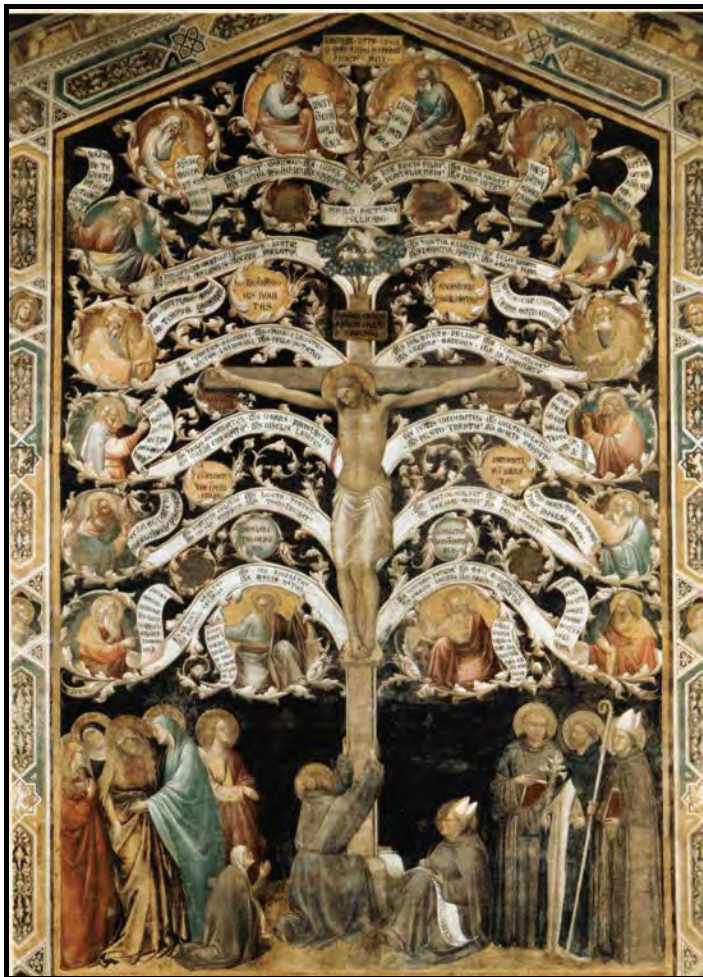
*this divine paradise prepared in Eden by the hands of God was a treasure house of every joy and pleasure. For “Eden” is interpreted as meaning “delight.” It was situated in the East and was higher than all the rest of the earth. It was temperate in climate and bright with the softest and purest of air. It was luxuriant with ever-blooming plants, filled with fragrance, flooded with light, and surpassing all conception of sensible fairness and beauty. In truth, it was a divine place and a worthy habitation for God in His image. And in it no brute beasts dwelt, but only man, the handiwork of God.” (NPNF, Vol.9, p.29)*



*“The Mighty Cedars of Lebanon” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving*

For the prophets, the Garden of Eden was synonymous with luxuriant growth and plenty. Joel used the image of Eden’s beauty to express the absolute devastation of the coming Day of the Lord - **“Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the Garden of Eden, behind them a desert waste - nothing escapes them.”** (Joel 2:3) Isaiah promises the restoration of Israel using the same allusion to the lost paradise of Eden: **“The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; He will make her deserts like Eden, her**

*wastelands like the garden of the Lord.*” (Isaiah 51:3) The great trees of Eden were incomparable in their magnitude and beauty. The prophet Ezekiel compared the Assyrian empire to a mighty cedar tree the like of which the world has never seen, and before whose destruction all the nations, depicted as a great forest of mighty trees, would tremble. The prophet drove his point home by comparing the cedar of Assyria to the magnificent trees which once stood in the Garden of Eden:



*“The Cross as the Tree of Life” by Taddeo Gaddi*

*“The cedars in the Garden of God could not rival it, nor could the pine trees equal its boughs, nor could the plane trees compare with its branches - no tree in the Garden of God could match its beauty. I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the Garden of God...Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all the trees that were well watered were consoled in the earth below...Which of the trees of Eden can be compared with you in splendor and majesty? Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below.”* (Ezekiel 31 31:8-9,16,18)

*“In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”* - Among all of the magnificent trees of the garden, two stand out for particular attention. These two trees, evidently standing side by side, are strategically

located *“in the middle of the garden”* - its focus and its heart. They define the nature of man and his existence. Dietrich Bonhoeffer notes the theological significance of this placement in his classic *Creation and Fall*. Bonhoeffer argues that the location of these trees *“in the middle of the garden”* signals that man’s existence is to be neither ego-centric nor autonomous. Adam’s world does not revolve around himself but around God’s gift of life, the presence of God within his life.



*“First of all there is the tree of life...It was at the center - that is all that is said about it. The life that comes forth from God is at the center. This means that God, who gives life, is at the center. At the center of the world which is at Adam’s disposal and over which he has been given dominion is not Adam himself but the tree of divine life. Adam’s life comes from the center which is not himself, but God. It constantly revolves around this center.” (Bonhoeffer, p. 55)*

Alongside the tree of life is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The connection between the two trees is essential. Human life is contingent upon man’s obedience of the command of God. Man is not a law unto himself, but by nature of his being must live within the limitations placed upon him by the Creator. To violate those limits is deny his identity as creature and usurp the role of the Creator. *“In this prohibition Adam is addressed in his freedom and in his creatureliness, and by the prohibition his being is confirmed in its kind. It means nothing but “Adam, thou art as thou art because of Me, thy Creator; so be as thou art a free creature. So be a creature.” (Bonhoeffer, p.57)* As subsequent events will tragically demonstrate, defiance of God’s command will destroy life and usher in the grim reign of death.



*“God Forbids the Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” by Edward Burne-Jones*

God created man to live forever in perfect happiness of His presence. The tree of life was the physical sign of that blessed immortality. It was certainly not some magical property inherent in the tree itself which enabled it to convey the gift of eternal life, but the power and the promise of God which offered the gift in the fruit of the tree. *“Ultimately, the tree’s power to convey life was due to its Planter, who alone grants or refuses to give of its fruit.”* (Matthews, p. 202) St. John utilizes this truth in the opening vision of the Book of Revelation as a powerful image of life eternal. In the letters to the seven churches, Christ, as the Lord of Life, asserts His prerogative to grant the gift of eternal life. He promises the church in Ephesus: ***“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.”*** (Revelation 2:7) God alone can bestow ***“the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.”*** In this sense, the function of the fruit of the tree of life was very much like that of the sacraments of the New Testament church. This insight was first expressed by St. Augustine:

*“And though they decayed not with years nor drew nearer death - a condition secured to them in God’s marvelous grace by the tree of life in the midst of paradise - yet they took other nourishment...They were then*



***“The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb” from the Ghent Altarpiece by Jan and Hubert van Eyck***

*nourished by other fruit which they took that their animal bodies might not suffer the discomfort of hunger or thirst; but they tasted the tree of life that death might not steal upon them from any quarter, and that they might not, spent with age, decay. Other fruits were, so to speak, their nourishment, but this, their sacrament.*” (Augustine, XIII, 20, p. 430)

The parallel between the Tree of Life in Eden and the sacraments of the church is beautifully presented in the central panel of the Ghent Altarpiece, painted in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Jan and Hugo van Eyck. The panel is entitled “*The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb.*” It depicts saints, angels, and martyrs gathering within the paradise of God. At the center of the painting are an altar and a font, signifying the sacraments of Communion and Baptism. Christ, the Lamb of God stands upon the red altar, the blood from his fatal wound spurting forth into a golden chalice. The inscription on the altar frontal reads - “*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*” In the center foreground is an fountain filled with living water. It is octagonal, the traditional shape of baptismal fonts. Along the outer edge of the fountain are inscribed the words - “*Behold the source of the river of life the flows from the throne of God and the Lamb.*” The connection to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden is reinforced by the prominent presence of Adam and Eve on the two wings of the altarpiece.

Leupold draws the comparison between the tree of life and the sacraments in greater detail:

*“We have an analogy to these cases in the matter of the sacraments. As in the sacraments by virtue of the divine Word the visible means become the vehicles of divine grace, so here, by virtue of the divine Word, which designates the one tree as the tree of life, life can in reality be imparted by its use when and under whatever circumstances God decrees...this sinless state would have received fuller confirmation in man’s physical being by the use of the tree of life, the eating of whose fruit would have communicated to those using it in faith rare benefits even for the body. So the trees are rightly regarded as sacramental in a sense.”* (Leupold, p. 120-121)

There have always been those who dismiss the tree of life as the stuff of myth and legend. They reject the concept of a tree whose fruit bestows eternal life as a blatant example of primitive superstition in Scripture borrowed from the pagan myths of ancient Mesopotamia. To such sceptics Martin Luther replies:

*“How did a physical food or a fruit have the power to preserve a body in this way that in the course of time it did not become inactive or sickly? But the answer is easy (Psalm 33:9): **“He spoke and it was done.”** For if God can make bread out of stone, why couldn’t He also preserve our powers by means of a fruit?”* (Luther, AE, 1, p.92)

Proverbs is the only other Old Testament book which mentions the tree of life. In this book of practical wisdom, Solomon repeatedly refers to the tree of life to remind his readers that truly meaningful life - human life as God intended it to be in the beginning - can only be experienced in relationship with God the Creator. He defines that genuine wisdom which begins with **“the fear of the Lord”** (Proverbs 1:7) as **“a tree of life to those who embrace her.”** (Proverbs 3:18). Later, the king declares: **“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.”** (Proverbs 11:30). Those things in life which bring real satisfaction and joy - **“a longing fulfilled”** (Proverbs 13:12) or **“the tongue that brings healing”** (Proverbs 15:4) - are also described as **“a tree of life.”** The common theme in all of these texts is the use of the tree of life as the reminder of that perfect life which man experienced in Eden before the fall into sin - that life lived in harmony with God and His will for which humanity was created. Charles Bridges described the significance of the tree of life in Proverbs with these well chosen words:

*“The paradise of God alone can furnish the full counterpart to the glory, beauty, and fruitfulness of wisdom. The tree of life was the means God chose for preserving lasting life, and continual vigor and health before man sinned. So true wisdom maintains man in the spiritual life of God’s grace and communion of His Spirit. Once our way was barred and no one could touch her. Now our way is opened to her in a better paradise. We sit down under the shade with great delight. Her branches bend down upon this world of sin and misery. Her clusters hang within the reach of the youngest child, and the fruit was sweet to my taste, sweeter than man ever tasted, since he became an exile from Eden. For what is so refreshing as near communion with God; access to Him; boldness in His presence; admission to His most holy delights? And if the earthly shadow and fruit be so rich, what will be on the other side of the river? Her monthly fruits, her healing leaves! (Revelation 22:2)”* (Bridges, p. 42)

In the aftermath of the fall into sin, the way to the tree of life was blocked by the fiery

sword of the angelic guardian (Genesis 3:24). The tree of life reappears in the New Testament in the book of Revelation. In his final climactic vision John observes the new Jerusalem, the eternal dwelling place of the saints, and there, at its center, stands the tree of life. The tree spans *“the river of the water of life.”* John symbolizes the perpetual abundance of that life by the continuous fruitfulness of the tree which bears *“twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.”* Its presence in the midst of the heavenly city signifies the undoing of sin’s damage and the restoration of the original creation - *“the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”* Human history comes full circle in the triumphant imagery of the vision for the new Jerusalem is Eden restored. Scripture’s final chapter closes with repeated references to the tree of life from the opening chapters of Genesis. The end of time returns us to time’s beginning.



*“The Cross as the Tree of Life”  
by Lawrence Stuckenschneider*

*“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations...Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city...If anyone takes away the words from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city which are described in this book.”* (Revelation 22:1-2,14,19)

There is a deliberate linguistic anomaly in the Greek text of Revelation 22. John uses the Greek noun “*xulon*” four times in this chapter to refer to the “*tree*” of life. The same noun occurs in Revelation’s only other reference to the tree of life - Revelation 2:7. Ordinarily, this word is not used in reference to living wood or trees. That is the Greek word “*dendron*.” “*Xulon*,” on the other hand, is characteristically used to describe dead wood, that is, trees that have been cut down and converted into lumber. “*Xulon*” is the word used in the Gospels in reference to the cross (i.e. Matthew 26:47; Mark 14:43). John’s use of this term in reference to the tree of life is clearly designed to link the cross with the tree of life thereby making the theological point that the cross of Christ, the tree upon which the Savior offered His life, has become the new tree of life for fallen humanity. Gregory of Nazianzus, a fourth century teacher of the church, asserts the same connection: “*Christ is brought up to the tree and nailed to it - yet by this tree of life He restores us.*” (NPNF,7, p. 309) Stephan Starke, a contemporary hymn writer, expresses this concept in his 1993 hymn “*The Tree of Life:*”

*“The tree of life with every good in Eden’s holy orchard stood,  
And of its fruit so pure and sweet God let the man and woman eat.  
Yet in this garden also grew another tree of which they knew;  
Its lovely limbs with fruit adorned against whose eating God had warned.*

*The stillness of that sacred grove was broken as the serpent strove  
With tempting voice to Eve beguile, and Adam too by sin defile.  
O day of sadness when the breath of fear and darkness, doubt and death,  
Its awful poison first displayed within the world so newly made.*

*What mercy God showed to our race, a plan of rescue by His grace:  
In sending One from woman’s seed, the One to fill our greatest need -  
For on a tree, uplifted high His only Son for sin would die,  
Would drink the cup of scorn and dread to crush the ancient serpent’s head.*

*Now from that tree of Jesus’ shame flows life eternal in His name;  
For all who trust and will believe, salvation’s living fruit receive.  
And of this fruit so pure and sweet the Lord invites the world to eat,  
To find within this cross of wood the tree of life with every good.*

A similar connection between the tree of life and the eternal reward of the saints can be observed in the apocryphal writings of the inter-testamental period and the first century. In 2 Esdras, God promises Ezra: *“The tree of life shall give them fragrant*



*“The Cross as the Tree of Life” by Lawrence Stuckenschneider*

*perfume, and they shall neither toil nor become weary...It is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, and a rest is appointed.”* (2 Esdras 2:12, 8:52; cf. also 4 Maccabees 18:16). 1 Enoch describes the tree of life as a *“fragrant tree”* which has been set aside until the time of judgment for the people of God:

*“And as for this fragrant tree, not a single human being has the authority to touch it until the great judgment...this is for the righteous and the pious and the elect will be presented with its fruit for life. He will plant it in the direction of the northeast upon the holy place - in the direction of the house of the Lord, the eternal King.”* (1 Enoch 25:4-5)

***“And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*** - The second of the two trees in

the center of the garden, ***“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,”*** plays a more prominent role in the Genesis narrative. This is one of only two instances where the tree is designated with its full title (cf. also Genesis 2:17). It is characteristically referred to elsewhere as simply ***“the tree”*** or ***“the tree in the middle of the garden”*** (cf. Genesis 3: 3,6,11,17). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil confronts man with moral responsibility - the choice between right and wrong. This is the sense in which the phrase knowing ***“good and evil”*** occurs throughout the Old Testament (cf. Leviticus 27:12,14; Deuteronomy 1:39; 2 Samuel 14:17; 19:35; 1 Kings 3:9; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Isaiah 7:15-16). Human beings have devised many functional flexible standards for moral judgment (i.e. - Does it work? Can I get away with it? Will I get caught? Does anyone get hurt? Etc.) In Scripture there is only one moral standard. It is objective and absolute. That standard is the Word of God. There was no mysterious magical poison in the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It looked good (Genesis 3:6) and probably tasted good too. In a physical sense it no doubt conveyed the same nutrients as any other fruit. But it was morally wrong to eat it because of the command of God. The fruit was forbidden, and to violate that divine prohibition was wrong. The tree was aptly named the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for to taste the forbidden fruit would be to know, that is, to experience evil. The acquisition of such knowledge constituted a rejection of God’s authority as Creator as man arrogantly claimed for himself the role of moral arbiter. John Calvin’s explanation of the text is helpful in this regard:

*“Concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we must hold that it was prohibited to man...that he might not seek to be wiser than became him, nor by trusting to his own understanding, cast off the yoke of God, and constitute himself an arbiter and judge of good and evil...We now understand what is meant by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; namely, that Adam might not, in attempting one thing or another, rely upon his own prudence; but that cleaving to God alone, he might become wise only by his obedience. Knowledge is here, therefore, taken disparagingly, in a bad sense, for that wretched experience which man, when he departed from the only fountain of perfect wisdom, began to acquire for himself.”* (Calvin, p. 118)





*John Calvin's Map Locating Eden in Contemporary Iraq  
(Note Adam and Eve Beneath the Tree at Center Right)*

### ***Genesis 2:10-14***

*A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris, it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

The location of the Garden of Eden has been the subject of endless speculation. It has been variously situated in Ethiopia, Armenia, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf. Calvin spends almost ten pages in his Commentary on Genesis proposing his own plan as to where Eden was to be found. A map pinpointing the site is also included in the commentary. Luther takes the opposite approach, dismissing the entire point as moot:

*“At this point people discuss where paradise is located. The interpreters torture themselves in amazing ways...Why waste words? The opinions are numberless. My answer is briefly this: It is an idle question about something no longer in existence. Moses is writing the history of the time before sin and the deluge. And so I believe that this place was called Eden either by Adam or at the time of Adam because of its fertility and the great charm which Adam beheld in it. And the name of the lost place persisted among his descendants, just as the names of Rome, Athens, or Carthage are still in existence today, although any traces of those great states are apparent. For time and the curse which sin deserves destroy everything. Thus when the world was obliterated by the deluge, together with its people and cattle, this famous garden was obliterated and became lost.” (Luther, AE, I, p. 88)*

Luther is exactly correct. The geographic features of the pre-flood world were drastically and permanently changed in the flood when ***“the world that was then, being overflowed with water, perished.”*** (2 Peter 3:6) Hence, every attempt to pinpoint the location of Eden is doomed to failure.



*“A River Watering the Garden Flowed from Eden”  
by Edward Burne-Jones*

A number of the place names used in this description are familiar. This may reflect the fact that survivors of the flood and their descendants preserved the names of many of the places which had been destroyed and used those names as they rebuilt the world to remind themselves of the glories of the civilization that perished beneath the waters of the flood. The rivers **“Pishon”** and **“Gihon”** are not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament. They do appear in the apocryphal book of Sirach, where they are once again associated with the mighty Tigris and Euphrates rivers of Mesopotamia - *“It fills men with wisdom like the Pishon, and like the Tigris at first fruits. It makes them full of understanding like the Euphrates, and like the Jordan at harvest time. It makes instruction shine forth like light, likem the Gihon at the time of vintage.”* (Sirach 24:25-27). The word *“pishon”* is derived from a root which means *“to break forth or to scatter.”* In this context the term might be translated as *“gusher.”* **“Gihon”** comes from a similar root - *“to break loose.”* There is a spring named **“Gihon”** in Jerusalem at the base of the Mount of Olives which provided a crucial water supply for the citadel of the town (cf. 1 Kings 1:33,38,45; 2 Chronicles 32:30; 33:14). Both rivers carry the diminutive *“on”* ending which may indicate that they were smaller tributaries of the Tigris and Euphrates.

The Pishon River flows through the **“land of Havilah.”** **“Havilah”** as an individual’s personal name occurs in both the genealogies of Ham and Shem (cf. Genesis 10:7,29). It recurs as a geographic designation in Genesis 25:18, defining the territory of the descendants of Ishmael - **“His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur.”** This reference would seem to suggest a location in southwestern Arabia.

The Gihon river flows through the **“land of Cush.”** Like **“Havilah,”** **“Cush”** is both a personal name and a geographic designation. **“Cush”** was one of the sons of Ham, a grandson of the patriarch Noah (Genesis 10:6). As a geographic location, **“Cush”** is the Hebrew designation for the Egyptian province of Nubia on the upper Nile, translated as Ethiopia in the Greek Septuagint (cf. Isaiah 20: 3,5; Jeremiah 46:9).

The names of the other two rivers of Eden, the Tigris and the Euphrates, are known to us as the great rivers of Mesopotamia. They flow from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian Gulf. The text also notes that the Tigris **“runs along the east side of Asshur.”** **“Asshur”** is the ancient capital city of the Assyrian Empire. It is perilous to assume that the rivers cited here are identical with their counterparts in the post flood world.



*Ezekiel's Vision of Streams of Living Water Flowing from the Threshold of the Temple - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Luther Bible Illustration*

The description of the four rivers of Eden is not designed to locate the Garden but to indicate its magnificent fertility and abundance. *“Although the location remains elusive for the modern cartographer, the point of the description is clear for the reader: the habitat God prepared is bountiful and beautiful.”* (Matthews, p. 208) The language of the text suggests that a great river originated within the garden. E.A. Speiser proposes the translation - *“A river rises in Eden to water the garden.”* (Speiser, p. 16). The water supply of that river was such that as it flowed out of the garden it divided into four separate branches each of which became a great river in its own right; hence the NIV’s translation - **“from there it divided; it had four headstreams.”** Leupold notes: *“This is a very unusual situation. We know of no parallel for it. We know of streams uniting to form one major stream. Hence the*

*reverse is true: one stream becomes four.*” (Leupold, p. 123) The language may indicate that in the earth’s original geography Eden was an elevated region. Ezekiel appears to support that opinion when he refers to the garden as **“Eden, the garden of God...the holy mount of God.”** (Ezekiel 28:13-14). This view was also widely held among the fathers of the early church. For example, St. Ephraem reports: *“With the eyes of the spirit I saw paradise, and beneath it were the tops of all the mountains.”* (Delumeau, p. 40). Legends of four great primeval rivers are widespread among the ancient peoples of the east in connection with the creation of the world. These traditions may well be fragmentary memories of the original state of our earth, preserved and passed down through the generations.

For the people of the arid Middle East, the picture of a super-abundant water supply served as a powerful image. Scripture develops this theme as an image of the overflowing abundance of the eternal life which God offers His people in Christ. The Psalmist declares that the man who delights in the law of the Lord **“is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.”** (Psalm 1:3) Jeremiah uses a very similar image to describe the secure confidence of the believer:

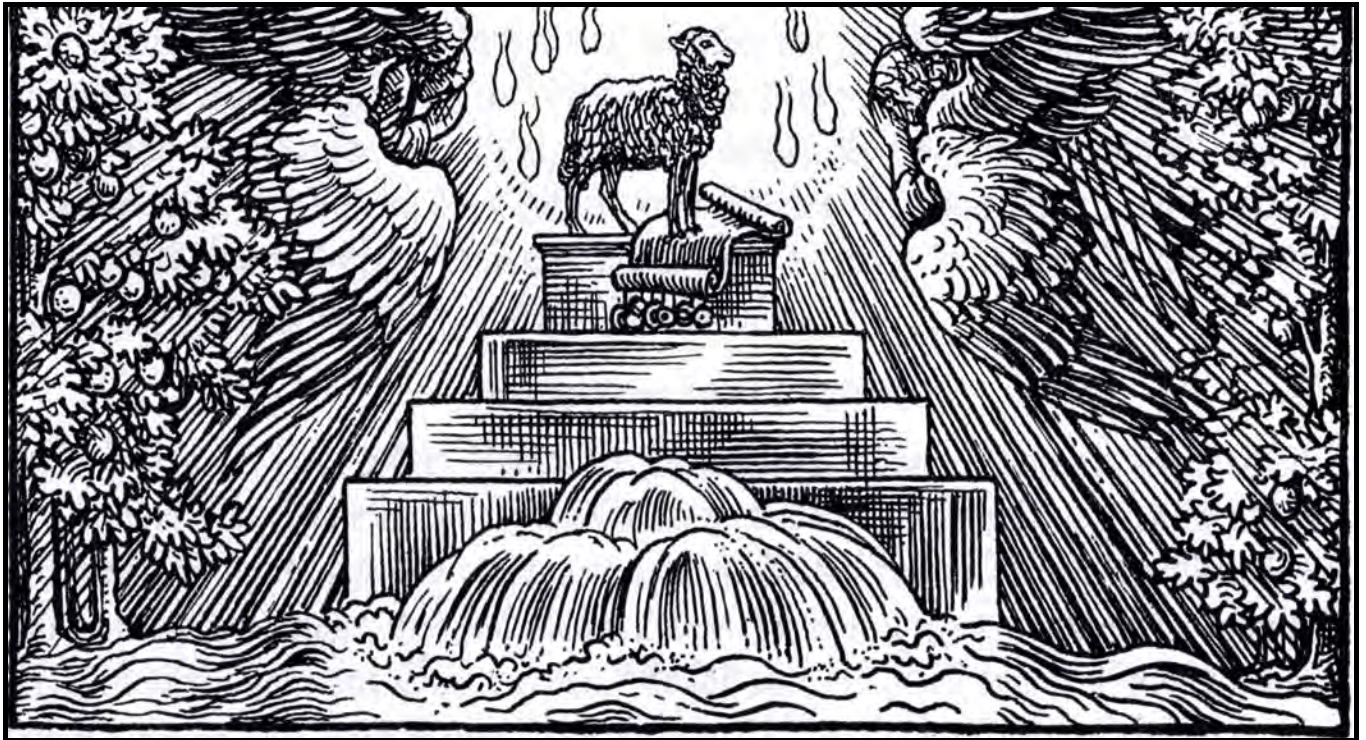
**“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in the year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”** (Jeremiah 7:7-8)

Psalm 46 tells of a great river that amply provides for the city of God and of those who trust in the Lord with these inspired words: **“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.”** (Psalm 46:4). The prophet Zechariah foretells the reign of the coming Messiah with similar imagery: **“On that day living water will flow from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea, and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter.”** (Zechariah 14:8) A mighty stream of water also flowed from the threshold of the temple, in Ezekiel’s vision of the perfect temple, creating abundant life wherever it flowed (Ezekiel 47:1-12). **“Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every moth they will bear because the water from the sanctuary flows from them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”** (Ezekiel 47:12) The image achieves its crescendo in Scripture’s final chapter where John describes the **“river of the water of life”** at the center of the

heavenly Jerusalem. *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.”* (Revelation 22:1-2)

The richness and abundance of the garden is further expressed by the text’s allusion to the region’s gold and precious stones - *“It winds through the entire land of Havilah where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)”* *“Aromatic resin”* is the Hebrew *“bedholah.”* The word is somewhat obscure. It can refer either to an aromatic resin used medicinally or to a precious stone, a ruby or a carbuncle. The Septuagint translates the term in this sense. That translation would seem to make the best sense in this context. The phrase would then read - *“The gold of that land is good, rubies and onyx are also there.”* This aspect of Eden’s abundance is also prominent in the most detailed description of the Garden outside of Genesis. In the course of an oracle against the king of Tyre, the prophet Ezekiel tells of the grandeur of Satan before his fall into sin.

*“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and moldings were made of gold;*



*“The River of the Water of Life” by Rudolf Schäfer*

***on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.”*** (Ezekiel 28:13-14)

This emphasis on the luxurious beauty of the precious metals and gems of paradise is also carried over into the imagery of Revelation and its magnificent depiction of the new Jerusalem as a city resplendent with gleaming gold and shining jewels:

***“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shown with the glory of God and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal...The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundation of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were made of twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.”***  
(Revelation 21:10-11,18-21)

Based upon this reference in Genesis, the rabbinic commentaries on the Old Testament tend to view precious stones in general, and particularly those which adorned the tabernacle and the jeweled vestments of the high priest as “*tokens and memorials of the Garden of Eden*” and the days which preceded man’s downfall into sin. (Cassutto, p. 119). The names of the twelve sons of Israel were engraved on two onyx stones mounted on the shoulders of the high priest’s ephod and the breastplate over his heart bore twelve jewels - ruby, topaz, beryl, turquoise, sapphire, emerald, jacinth, agate, amethyst, chrysolite, onyx, and jasper - upon each of which a tribe’s name was engraved (Exodus 28:6-21).

***“The onyx stones, enclosed in a setting of gold filigree, were set on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod of the priest who made atonement for the sins of the children of Israel, as a memorial to the time when man had not yet fallen into sin.”***(Cassutto, p. 120)



*“The Heavenly Jerusalem” by Rudolf Schärer*

***Genesis 2:15-17***

***The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”***

***“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden...”*** - The narrative now returns to the theme of man’s creation and placement in Eden which had been



interrupted in verse 8 by the description of the garden. Once again, the language of the text suggests that man's creation from the dust of the ground took place somewhere other than the Garden of Eden and that God subsequently ***“put him”*** there. In the previous reference (vs.8) the Hebrew verb is *“sim”* which means *“to put or to place.”* The parallel phrase here in verse 15 uses the verb *“nuah”* which refers to the secure rest which God gives His people (cf. Genesis 19:16; Deuteronomy 3:20; 12:10; 25:19) or to the dedication of something in the presence of the Lord (cf. Exodus 16:33-34; Leviticus 16:23; Numbers 17:4; Deuteronomy 26:4,10) The use of the term here signifies God design for Eden as a secure refuge, a resting place as it were, where man can savor the presence of God. Commentator John Sailhamer describes the appropriate combination of both meanings in this context: *“Man was “put” into the garden where he could rest and be safe and man was “put” into the garden in God’s presence where he could have fellowship with God.”* (Sailhamer, p. 45)

***“To work it and take care of it.”*** - It is significant to note that even in the perfect world which God had fashioned the ideal state of sinless man is not one of indolence and frolic without responsibility, but rather one of serious activity and service. The NIV’s translation ***“to work it and take care of it”*** reflects the typical English translation of this phrase. Many commentators, including the renown Hebrew scholar



*“The Creatures of Paradise” by Bocksperger-Amman*

Umberto Cassutto, challenge this interpretation because of the linguistic structure of the Hebrew text. Cassutto offers the translation “*to worship and obey.*” He argues that this is the sense in which these two verbs are most often used in the Pentateuch. The verb “*work*” (Hebrew - “*abad*”) frequently describes priestly duties in the worship of the tabernacle and later the temple (cf. Exodus 3:12; 38:21; 39:32,42; Numbers 3:10; 18:16; 1 Chronicles 24:3,19; 2 Chronicles 8:14). “*Take care of*” (Hebrew - “*samar*”) is used in regard to obeying the requirements of God’s Law (cf. Genesis 17:9-10; 18:19; 26:5; Deuteronomy 4:6; 7:12; 29:9). It also describes the faithful implementation of God’s instructions for the worship of the tabernacle (cf. Leviticus 8:35; Numbers 1:53; 18:5). The two verbs occur together in this sense in Numbers 3:7-8 -

***“They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the Tent of Meeting by doing the work of the Tabernacle. They are to take care of all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the Tabernacle.”***

Sailhamer observes: “*Man is put in the garden to worship God and obey him. Man’s life in the garden was to be characterized by worship and obedience; he was a priest, not merely a worker and keeper of the garden.*” (Sailhamer, p. 45) The fact that God’s first direct command to mankind follows immediately in verse 6 is consistent with this view. Furthermore, in Genesis 3:23, the necessity of working the ground in the ongoing struggle to produce the food needed for survival is seen as a consequence of man’s fall into sin.

***“And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree...”*** - This is the first occurrence of the verb “*to command*” (Hebrew - “*sawa*”). This verb is used twenty-five times in Genesis. The inference of God’s command in these verses is that good alone knows what is good and what is not good for man. To enjoy the good man must trust and obey God. The creature is bound to the will of the Creator. Man can never be autonomous - that is, a law unto himself. By nature of his being man must live within the limitations which God places upon him. As a creature fashioned in the image and after the likeness of God man has the ability and the responsibility to make moral choices. The Word of God is the objective and absolute standard which defines the difference between right and wrong for man as a creature of God.

God addresses man personally - “***You are free....***”. As the creature fashioned in the



**“The Earthly Paradise” by John Parkinson - 1629 English Engraving  
Demonstrating the Abundant Plant Life of Eden**

image and likeness of God man has a unique sense of personal identity and awareness. He is a rational being capable of conscious thought and communication. The text of Genesis is most emphatic in ascribing to human life a particular quality and a special value. This is the result of humanity's creation in God's image. That unique quality and value is intrinsic in every person by virtue of their humanity. It is not dependent upon their intelligence, appearance, physical strength, size or health. God created human life as a reflection of Himself and therefore all human life is inherently precious. *"Unlike all other created life, the human being is endowed with a special significance as a "person" in the eyes of his Creator, enjoying a privileged depth of divine-human communication...All human life merits respect and protection by virtue of the esteemed position to God has exalted it."* (Matthews, p. 210) This emphasis can also be seen in the stern punishment decreed for the wanton destruction of human life: *"And for each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man."* (Genesis 9:5-6)

*"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden..."* - God's single prohibition is set against the background of broad permission, which reveals the abundant bounty of God's Fatherly care. The Hebrew text is most emphatic in this regard. It might literally be translated - *"You may eat freely of any and every tree in the garden."* Contrary to the constant suggestion of Satan (cf. Genesis 3:1), the law of God is not burdensome or oppressive, but rather an expression of His loving care. God made abundant and ample provision for man's needs in the original creation.

*"But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"* - The restriction is direct and unequivocal, resembling in its form the Ten Commandments. There is no uncertainty here. Man may choose to obey or to disobey the clear command of God. The presence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden meant that man would continually be confronted with that choice. Luther explains the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with these well chosen words:

*"He now builds him, as it were, a temple that he may worship Him and thank the God who has so kindly bestowed all these things upon him. Today in our churches we have an altar for the administration of the eucharist, and we have platforms or pulpits for teaching the people. These objects are not built only to meet a need but also to create a solemn atmosphere. But this tree of knowledge of good*

*and evil was Adam's church, altar, and pulpit. Here he was to yield to God the obedience that he owed, give recognition to the Word and will of God, give thanks to God, and call upon God for aid against temptation...Therefore, let us learn that some definite form of worship and a definite work of obedience were necessary for man, who was created to have all the other living creatures under his control, to know his Creator and to thank him.*" (Martin Luther, AE,1, pp. 94-95)

***"For when you eat of it you will surely die."*** - This so-called "motive clause" describes the consequences of disobedience. Immortality was not a quality inherent in man. It was a gift bestowed by the God Who alone is immortal by nature as St. Paul declares: ***"God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, Whom no one has ever seen or can see."*** (1 Timothy 6:16). The Hebrew text insists that the death penalty applied immediately (literally - "on the day") upon transgression. Why then, didn't Adam and Eve die on the day of their sin? In a sense they did in that death became a part of the human reality in the instant that Adam sinned. ***"It understood the Bible's words "you shall die" not as "you shall immediately cease to exist," but "you shall become a person who dies," you shall become mortal."*** (Kugel, p. 69) When Adam sinned God's warning was fulfilled and mortality came upon him and all who would be descended from him. St Paul explains:



***"The History of Paradise" by Jost Amman - 1583***

***“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned - for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command , as did Adam, was a pattern of the One to come...For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.”*** (Romans 5:12-19, 6:23)

2 Baruch, a New Testament apocryphal book written in the second century AD, points out that all of the years which Adam lived after the fall were of no benefit to him since he had brought death upon himself and his posterity:

*”What did it profit Adam that he lived nine hundred and thirty years and transgressed that which he was commanded? Therefore, the multitude of time that he lived did not profit him, but it brought death and cut off the years of those who were born from him. Adam sinned, and death*



***“The Creation of Adam and Eve” by Johann Teufel - 1572***

*was decreed against all those who were to be born.” (2 Baruch 17:2-3;23:4)*

On the very day of Adam’s sin, humanity was banished from the Garden of Eden and barred from access to the tree of life. *“But a very horrible snake craftily deceived them to go to the fate of death...The immortal God became angry with them and expelled them from the place of the immortals.” (Sibylline Oracles 1:39-41)*



*“Adam and Eve Banished from Paradise” by Michealangelo*

***Genesis 2:18-25***

*Then God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him.” Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its*

*name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.*

*"Then God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone..."* - Once again (cf. 1:26) divine deliberation signals an event of particular importance. The profound significance of human sexuality is evident from the fact that nearly a third of Genesis 2 is devoted to a detailed description of the creation of the woman from the man. Genesis 1 had implied that for human beings gender - that is, our identity as male or female - is an integral part of our creation in the divine image - *"So God created them in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* (Genesis 1:27). That implicit suggestion is now amplified and explained.

*"It is not good for the man to be alone"* - Seven times the text of Genesis 1 had affirmed the goodness of everything which God had created. Against that background this observation is rather startling. Chronologically, the events of this verse precede God's concluding declaration of the goodness of all of His creation in Genesis 1:31 - *"God saw all that He had made and it was very good."* The deliberate contrast between "goodness" and "not goodness" serves to alert the reader of the importance of companionship for man. The structure of the Hebrew text accentuates the point by placing the words *"not good"* at the beginning of the sentence. The "not goodness" here is one of incompleteness. At this point on the sixth day of creation, God's intent for humanity had not yet been fully implemented. God never planned for man to be alone. The text in no way implies - contrary to the irreverent suggestion of some liberal commentators, that God suddenly realizes a deficiency in His original concept and only now acts to correct it. This observation is included in the text for humanity's benefit, to provide us, as it were, with a glimpse into the mind of God, so that we might better understand His divine plan and purpose. The concern that humanity clearly understand both the importance of their sexuality and the manner in which



male and female are to co-exist in role/relationship with one another determines the manner and sequence of mankind's creation as man and woman. The distinctive roles assigned to men and women in Scripture are based upon this "Order of Creation." The concept of Orders of Creation has historically played an important role in Lutheran theology. The term is used to describe:

*"a particular position which, by the will of God, any created object occupies in relation to others. God has given to that which has been created a certain definite order which, because it is created by Him, is the expression of His immutable will. These relationships belong to the very structure of created existence."* ("Women in the Church", p. 21)

Every major Biblical passage on men, women, and marriage refers back to this segment of Genesis as its foundation. James Montgomery Boice summarizes the content and the significance of the Genesis text in this way:

*"In these verses we learn that the woman was made **for** man; she was made **from** man; and she was given **to** man - the greatest of all God's gifts. In the next section we will find that she was named **by** man. On the basis of this created order, the later, New Testament, instructions for the relationship of man*



*"The Creation of Eve" by George Frederic Watts*

*and a woman within marriage and the function of a man and woman within the church are constructed..”* (Boice, p. 107)

It would be difficult to overestimate the foundational significance of these texts. *“Genesis 1-3 is the authoritative fountain for the apostle Paul’s soteriology and his instruction on home and ecclesiastical order.”* (Matthews, p. 219) The New Testament repeatedly affirms that the pattern of the first woman’s creation is indicative of God’s design for the role/relationship between men and women. This is especially clear in those texts which discuss the role of women in the church. ***“Adam was formed first, then Eve.”*** (1 Timothy 2:13) ***“For man did not come from woman, but woman from man, neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.”*** (1 Corinthians 11:8-9)

***“For the man to be alone.”*** - Mankind was not created ***“to be alone.”*** *“Man will not truly live until he loves, giving himself away to another.”* (Matthews, p. 213) This is the case because man is created in the image of God. Thus, in a sense, to declare that it is not good for man to be alone is, at the same time, to indicate that it was not good for God to be alone. Man’s needs cannot simply be equated with God. God is self-sufficient. He has no needs and depends upon no one. His action in creation was caused by nothing outside of Himself, determined solely by His own good pleasure (cf. Ephesians 1:11). And yet, God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8). God’s action in creation was an expression of the love which is His essence. God created man to live in loving relationship with Him so that He might lavish the richness of His love upon him. It was not good for man to be alone because man had been created in the image and after the likeness of the God who is love. Man reflects the image of the God Who created him in his capacity to love and to be loved. This is the third and final component in the divine image as explicated in Genesis 2. Moral responsibility, reason and the ability to communicate rationally, and the capacity for love - these three reflect the divine image in which God created man.

The Hebrew text uses the definite article with *“adham,”* which the NIV correctly translates as ***“the man.”*** The term is not yet used exclusively as a personal name, (As previously noted, the first undisputed use of the term as the proper name *“Adam”* does not occur until 4:25) The Hebrew noun *“ha adham”* does refer to the first human being who came to be called *“Adam,”* but at the same time it refers to every descendant of Adam, all those whom Adam represents as the father of the human race. Father Adam is everyman. Adam’s need for companionship and love is not an individual peculiarity. It is characteristic of humanity. By using the word generically,

the text indicates that that which was not good for the first man would also not be good for humanity. This emphasis is consistent throughout the opening chapters of Genesis. Adam is not merely a man. He is the original man, from whom all other human beings will come. That which impacts him also affects everyone who comes after him. This reality will become particularly important in the next chapter as we consider the significance of Adam's fall into sin.

***“I will make him a helper suitable for him.”*** - The man is completely passive in this process. The text does not even indicate that Adam recognizes his dilemma at this point. God expresses His concern and initiates the action needed to resolve it.



***“The Creation of Eve” by Edward Burne-Jones***

***“A helper suitable for him.”*** - Genesis maintains a careful balance between the themes of sexual equality and unique gender roles for men and women. Modern culture tends to view these concepts as contradictory and mutually exclusive. Genesis weaves them together in a masterful way, clearly indicating both, but never emphasizing one at the expense of the other. The terms used to describe God's proposed solution to man's companionship problem illustrate this meticulous approach. Each stresses one side of the paradox. Together they form a beautifully balanced whole. Man's companion is to be ***“a helper suitable for him.”*** (Hebrew -

“ezer keneghdo”). The noun **“helper”** is used 122 times in the Old Testament in a variety of contexts. It comes from a root which means to provide support or assistance. There is no connotation of inferiority or weakness in this term. In fact, the word is often used in reference to God as He assists and protects His people.

***“One son was named Gershom for Moses said, “I have become an alien in a foreign land”; and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, “My father’s God was my Helper; He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” (Exodus 18:3-4)***

***“Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you and you will trample down their high places.” (Deuteronomy 33:29)***

***“O house of Israel, trust in the Lord - He is their help and shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord - He is their help and shield. You who fear Him, trust in the Lord - He is their help and shield.” (Psalm 115:9-11)***

***“I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip - He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121:1-3)***

The word is also used to describe human helpers, most often in a military context (cf. Joshua 1:13-14; 1 Chronicles 12:1; 2 Chronicles 28:16)

However, while the term **“helper”** does not denote lesser quality, value or importance, in this context, it does clearly indicate distinct differentiation in the role/relationship between men and women. It is most significant that the word which God uses to describe the woman whom He is about to make for the man emphasizes her subordination to the man. He does not call her a companion or a partner. Instead, He refers to her as **a “helper.”** This designation, along with the manner in which woman is created signals the subordinate role which He intends woman to play in relationship to the man. Dr. Carl Lawrenz writes:

*“Being made a helper for the man can only be understood as being made for a role subordinate to that of the man....It involves a divine assignment of distinctive responsibilities to the woman in the interest of marriage and the family upon which human society is basically structured.” (Lawrenz, p. 280)*



*“The Creation of Eve” by Hartmann Schedel*

The characteristic word in the New Testament for this role/relationship is the Greek verb *“hupotasso,”* the equivalent of the English word *“subordinate.”* (i.e. 1 Corinthians 14:34; Ephesians 5:22; 1 Timothy 2:11). This subordination does not carry the negative connotations often connected with concept. It simply refers to taking one’s assigned place within a ordered structure. Stephen Clark offers the helpful insight that the submission in question is *“unity-subordination”*- that is, the voluntary submission of one equal to another *“carried on for the sake of a unity or a higher cause.”* (Clark, p. 41) In this instance the unity or higher cause is marriage and

the family. Clark goes on to note that *“This is the kind of subordination that is integral to genuine community.”* (Clark, p. 41)

The substantive equality of men and women is emphasized in the second term God uses to describe the woman He is about to create. She is not merely a **“helper,”** but a **“helper suitable for him.”** The Hebrew adjective *“kenegdo”* literally means *“like what is in front of him.”* It emphasizes the correspondence between men and women and expresses the idea of complementarity. The man alone was incomplete, unable to function in the way that God intended. Man and woman together each meet the needs of the other and together form the completed whole. St. Paul describes this dimension of the male/female role/relationship in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12. ***“In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.”*** Kenneth Matthews summarizes the meaning of the term in this way:

*“The focus is on the equality of the two in terms of their essential constitution. Man and woman share in the human sameness that cannot be found elsewhere in creation among the beasts. In every way the woman shares in the same features of personhood as does the man. In 1:26-28 this equality of the man and woman as image bearers has priority over their differences in sexual roles, although both were crucial to realizing the intended blessing.”* (Matthews, p. 213)

***“Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field...”*** - Critics have pounced upon this phrase in their zeal to invent contradictions between the two creation accounts. They argue that the sequence of events here differs from that of the preceding chapter. This assertion overlooks the difference between the chronological approach of Genesis 1 in contrast to the topical or thematic approach of Genesis 2. Moses’ purpose in recalling the creation of the other animal life forms at this point is not the result of a lapse in his memory which in this instance places the creation of the animals after that of man. His intent, instead is to stress that despite the similarity between man and the other animals, none of them are capable of meeting the man’s unique need for **“a helper suitable for him.”** Two phrase serve to stress the similarity between man and the other animals. Like man, the other animals were also **“formed out of the ground”** and like man the other animals are also referred to **“living creatures”** (Hebrew - *“nephesh hayyah”*).



*“The Naming of the Animals” by Edward Burne-Jones*

**“And He brought them to the man to see what he would name them.”** - In the Biblical view, the naming of someone or something is an exercise of authority, a token of lordship. When the tribes of Gad and Reuben took possession of the lands on the east bank of the Jordan they renamed the cities to signal that a change in ownership had occurred (cf. Numbers 32:38). In the final days of the Kingdom of Judah, Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt deposed removed Jehoahaz as king and replaced him with Eliakim. Pharaoh changed Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim so that all might know that he was nothing more than a puppet in the hands of his Egyptian master (2 Kings 23:34). The prerogative of bestowing or changing a name was a demonstration of dominion. In this instance, man’s responsibility to provide names for the animals is an expression of his God-given authority to exercise dominion over the earth (cf. Genesis 1:28). The Lord of the universe named its components and its time divisions (cf. Genesis 1:5,8,10). He now delegates to man the task of naming those creature over which He had given him dominion.

Not every animal is included. The text specifies that **“all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air”** are presented to Adam (cf. Leviticus 17:13). In verse 20, **“the livestock”** are added as a third category of those named. The creatures of the sea

(Genesis 1:20) and “*creatures that move along the ground*” (Genesis 1:24) are absent in this listing.

The names given were not chosen at random. To the Hebrews a name was expressive of the nature or character of the one named. So also in this instance, the names Adam bestows upon the animals are appropriate and significant for the various animal species. Adam’s mind, heart and will were closely attuned to God the Creator while he still possessed the divine image. He was thus able to discern the creative thoughts as they had been expressed in the forming of the original creatures. The names he chose were perfectly fitting and in keeping with the divinely endowed characteristics of each creature - “*And whatever he called each living creature, that was its name.*” Luther notes:

*“Here again we are reminded of the superior knowledge and wisdom of Adam, who was created in innocence and righteousness. Without any new enlightenment, solely because of the innocence of his nature, he views all the animals and thus arrives at such a knowledge of their nature that he can give each one a suitable name that harmonizes with its nature. From this enlightenment there also followed, of course, the rule over all the animals, something which is also pointed out here, since they were named in accordance with Adam’s will. Therefore, by one single word, he was able to compel lions, bears, boars, tigers, and whatever else there is among the more outstanding animals to care out whatever suited their nature. This ability, too, we have lost through sin.”* (Martin Luther, AE,1,pp.119-120)

**“But for Adam no suitable helper was found.”** - This entire procedure was for man’s benefit, not God’s. It was, as one commentator describes it, “*a pedagogic device*” (Leupold, p. 130). The parade of animals past the man was intended by God to lead Adam to recognize and understand his own need.





*“Adam and Eve in Eden” by Lucas Cranach the Elder*

*“Before extending His gift of a helper, God first gave the man an opportunity to share his thoughts. God took steps to make man keenly aware of the fact that he was still alone. He followed a course that would awaken a deep longing in the man’s heart for a companion who would be like him.”* (Lawrenz, p. 282)

The Talmud depicts the animals passing by in pairs and the man commenting: *“Everything has its partner, but I have no partner.”* (Wenham, p. 68) God’s procedure had served its purpose. Adam now knew what God had known all along. There was no creature anywhere on earth who was capable of meeting his need. This sad truth is emphasized by the final phrase of the verse - ***“But for Adam no suitable helper was found.”*** The point is more emphatic in the original text. The Hebrew verb in this phrase is active, not passive as in the English translation. It literally reads - *“But as for the man, he did not find a helper fit for him.”* The NIV translates *“adam”* as the proper name *“Adam”* for the first time in this phrase while other English translations (RSV, NRSV, REB, NAB, NJB) continue to use the more generic translation *“the man.”*

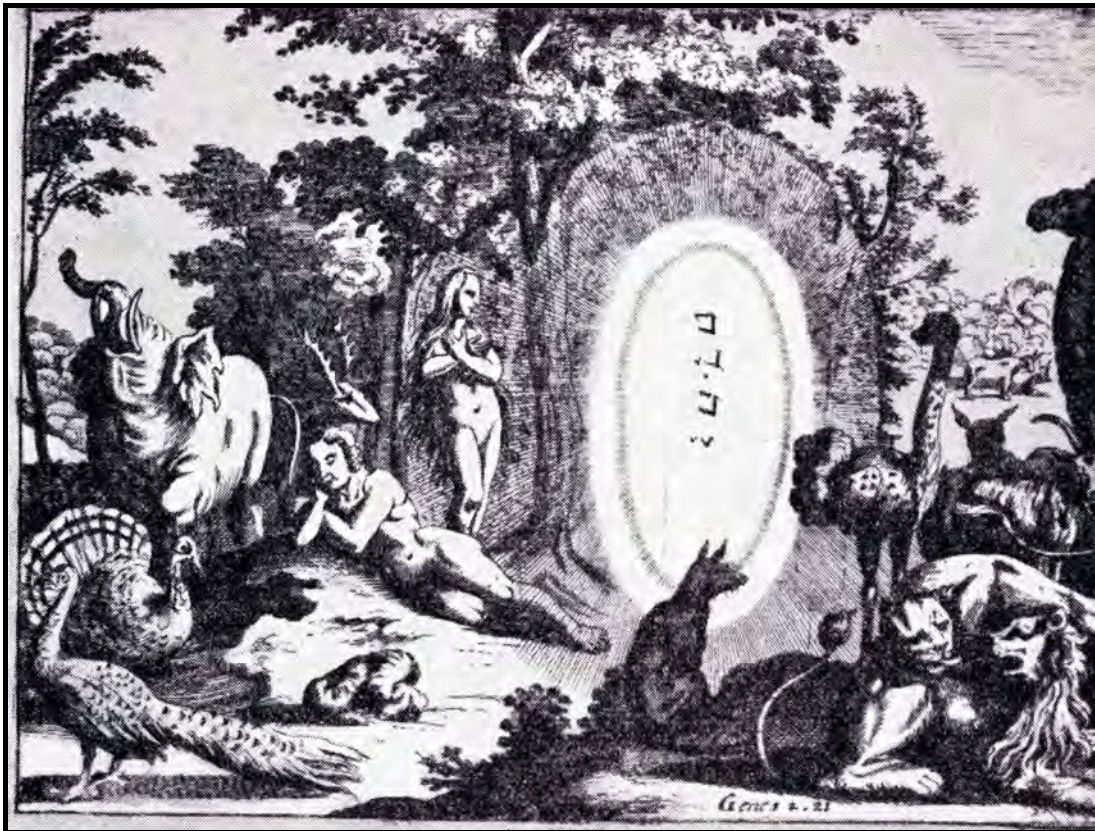
***“So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep...”*** - Raymond Ortlund recreates the scene in this way:

*“Imagine the scene: as the last of the beasts plods off with its name, the man turns away with a trace of perplexity and sorrow in his eyes. God says, “Son, I want you to lie down. Now close your eyes and sleep.” The man falls into a deep slumber. The Creator goes to work, opening the man’s side, removing a rib, closing the wound, and building the woman. There she stands, perfectly gorgeous and uniquely suited to the man’s need. The Lord says to her, “Daughter, I want you to go stand over there. I’ll come for you in a moment.” She obeys. Then God touches the man and says, “Wake up now, son. I have one last creature for you to name. I’d like to know what you think of this one.” And God leads Eve out to Adam, who greets her with rhapsodic relief.”* (Ortlund, pp. 100-101)

Ortlund’s somewhat imaginative depiction of the event effectively expresses the role of the naming of the animals in preparing Adam for the creation of the woman. Having led the man to recognize and appreciate his need for a helper, the Lord God

now proceeds to prepare the gift and present it. The purpose of the sleep is not merely anesthetic. Man is completely passive in the creation of woman. It is God alone who acts. The state of deep sleep to which Adam is consigned emphasizes that passivity (cf. Genesis 15:12; 28:11). The Hebrew word is “*tardema*” which describes a state of complete unconsciousness. “*Man is not even a conscious spectator. The sleep preserves for the man the mystery of her creation and the subsequent surprise at her appearance.*” (Matthews, p. 216)

**“He took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh.”** - God chooses not to form woman from the dust of the ground but from the man’s own body to demonstrate that man and woman are of the same substance and stress the unity and equality of the sexes. The verb “**took**” (Hebrew - “*laqah*”) anticipates the establishment of marriage. This word is commonly used in the Old Testament as an idiom for marriage - *the taking of a wife.*” (Cf. Genesis 4:19; 6:2; 12:19; 19:14) God does not remove a bare bone from the man’s side. The meaning of the text is that God took together with the bone the flesh attached to it (cf. Genesis 2:23). The significance of the rib has been widely discussed throughout history. The Talmud



**“The Creation of Eve” by Balthasar Wust - 1686**

explains:

*“God thought to Himself, “We should not create her beginning with the head, so that she not be frivolous, nor from the eye, that she not be a starrer at men, nor from the ear that she not be an eavesdropper, nor from the mouth that she not talk too much, nor from the heart that she be not jealous, nor from the hand that she be not light-fingered, nor from the foot that she be not a gadabout, but from a covered up place on man. For even when a man is standing naked, that spot is covered.”*  
(Matthews, p. 217)

St. Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor of the medieval church, offers what may be the best known interpretation of the rib’s selection:



*“Adam Naming the Animals” by Poyet*

*“For since the woman should not have authority over the man (1 Timothy 2:12) it would not have been fitting for her to have been formed from his head, nor since she is not to be despised by the man, as if she were but his servile subject, would it have been fitting for her to have been formed from his feet.”* (Matthews, p. 217)

Classic Christian commentary has tended to focus on the rib as *“the guardian of the heart.”* Matthew Henry said it best: *“Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”* (Wenham, p. 69) After the removal of the rib, God restored Adam’s body to perfect health and wholeness as before.



*“Lilith” - The Burney Relief - 2000 B.C.*

## *Excursus*

### *“Lilith”- The Legend of Adam’s First Wife*

Among the rabbinic legends that surround the Genesis creation accounts none is more intriguing nor more durable than the tale of the demon queen, the night hag “*Lilith*.” The name itself is Sumerian in origin and originally referred to the female demons or wind spirits that dwelt in the deserts and seduced unwary men or preyed upon pregnant women and their newborn children. Amulets and charms were widely used to protect nursing mothers and newborn children from the dreaded night hag. The Dead Sea Scrolls, include this protective incantation: “*And I, the sage, sound the majesty of His beauty to terrify and confound all the spirits of destroying angels, and*



*“Lilith” by John Collier - 1887*

*the bastard spirits, the demons, Lilith, and those who strike suddenly.”* (Gaines, p. 15) In the mythology of ancient Babylon, Lilith was a “*succubus*,” that is, a female demon who used sexual desire to lure men to destruction, attacking them in their sleep and sucking their bodies dry of life in the act of intercourse. In the Burney Relief, a terra cotta plaque from Mesopotamia around 2,000 BC, Lilith is depicted as a voluptuous winged woman. She wears a horned crown and has the taloned feet of a bird of prey. She stands on the back of two lions and is flanked by a pair of screech owls. The sole reference to Lilith in Scripture is found in Isaiah 34:14 where she is linked to the night demons and other denizens of the darkness. Prophesying the desolation of Edom, Isaiah warns that her cities will be reduced to empty ruins -

*“Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for screech owls. Desert creatures will meet with hyenas and the wild goats will bleat to each other; there too will Lilith take cover, seeking rest.”* (Isaiah 34:13-14)

Lilith is first linked to Adam in Jewish apocryphal and kabbalistic texts during the Middle Ages. J.H. Gaines speculates that the rabbis perceived a contradiction between Genesis 1 and 2 and the invention of Lilith became their way of resolving that contradiction.

*“Considering every word of the Bible to be accurate and sacred, commentators needed a midrash or story to explain the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2. God creates woman twice - once with*

*man, once from man's rib - so their must have been two women. The Bible names the second woman Eve; Lilith was identified as the first in order to complete the story.*" (Gaines, p. 19)

The "*Yalkut Reubeni*," a kabbalistic commentary on Genesis, reports that Lilith's corruption was the result of the impure material used in her creation: "*In the beginning, the Holy One, blessed be He, created Lilith, and she was not flesh but the scum of the earth and its impure sediments, and she was a harmful spirit. And the Holy One, blessed be He, took her away from Adam and gave him another in her stead.*" (Patai, p. 65) The most detailed account of Lilith is provided in an apocryphal book from around 700 AD entitled "*The Alphabet of Ben Sira.*" In the fifth of its twenty-two episodes, Ben Sira, a Jewish sage in the court of Nebuchadnezzar relates the story of Lilith. In this account, Lilith is formed from the same dust whence Adam had been taken to meet the man's need for a suitable helper. But Lilith is willful and proud and soon finds herself in constant conflict with the man. "*Her willful temperament, however, made peaceful coexistence impossible, and she bitterly opposed any attempt to subjugate her, refusing in particular to lie beneath Adam in their marital union.*" (*Witches and Witchcraft*, p. 16) In her rage against her husband, she defiantly pronounces the sacred name of God. Empowered by its magic, Lilith gains the ability of flight and flies off across the desert toward the Red Sea. There she spawns a horde of demons. God sends three angels in pursuit but Lilith refuses to return to the Garden of Eden and warns that she will destroy men and their children throughout time in retaliation for Adam's mistreatment of her.

The Talmud further informs us that Lilith became the bride of Satan and ruled as the Queen of demons in Hell. The rabbis also connect Lilith along with Satan to the serpent who beguiled Eve in the garden. In this way, Adam's first wife gains her revenge through his second wife and brings about her former husband's downfall. In classic Christian art this concept is expressed by the depiction of the serpent with the face and form of a woman. The best known example of this pattern is Michelangelo's presentation of the Fall in the frescos of the Sistine chapel.

The Victorian poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, develops this theme in a masterful way in his 1868 poem "*Eden's Bower.*" First, Lilith entices the serpent to aid her in her vengeance:



*“Lilith and Her Serpent” by von Stuck*

*“O bright snake, the death worm of Adam! Wreath thy neck with my hair’s bright tether, And wear my gold and thy gold together!... Help, sweet snake, sweet lover of Lilith! And let God learn how I loved and hated Man in the image God created.... Help me once against Eve and Adam! Help me once for this one endeavor, And then my love shall be thine forever!... Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam! That he may wail my joy that forsook him. And curse the day that the bride-sleep took him!”*

Then, she-demon anticipates the destruction and judgment of Adam and Eve with gleeful malice:

*“In thy shape I’ll go back to Eden, In these coils that tree will I grapple, And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple...Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam and then they both shall know they are naked, And their hearts ache as my heart hath ached....O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam, Driven forth as the beasts of his naming By the sword that forever is flaming.”*

The bizarre legend of Lilith persists to the present day in the world of witchcraft and the occult. Modern feminism has adopted the figure of this defiant bride as one of their patron saints, or should we say, goddesses.

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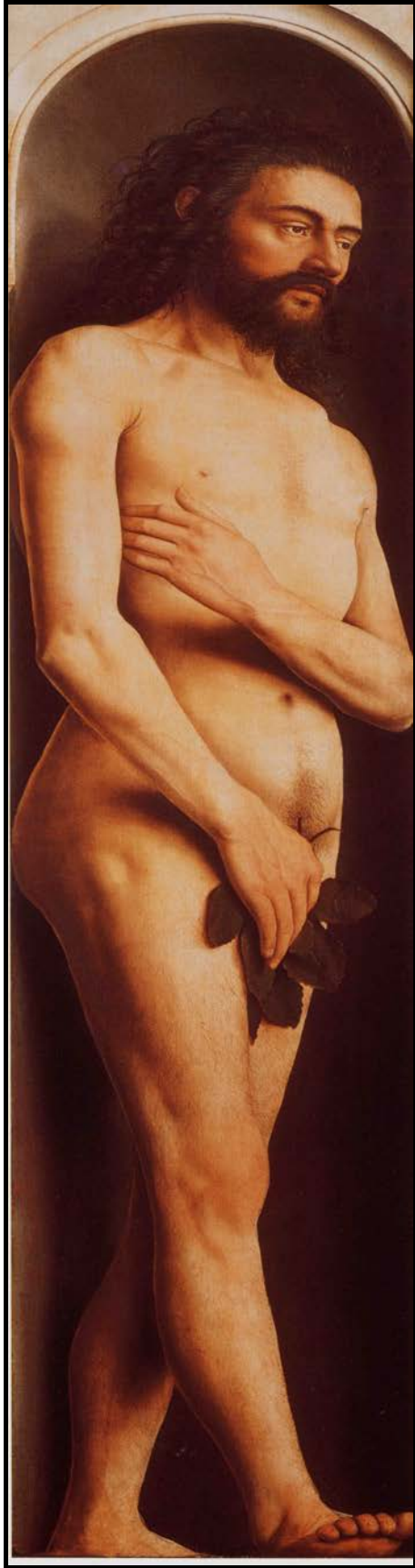




*“The Creation of Eve” by John Elias Riddenger*

***“Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of man, and He brought her to the man.”*** - The Hebrew verb used in this sentence literally means *“to build.”* This is its only use in the early chapters of Genesis. It occurs in Psalm 78:69 in reference to the Lord building His sanctuary and in Amos 9:6 to describe God as ***“He who builds His lofty palace in the heavens.”*** As an able and resourceful builder constructs buildings of grace and perfection from the raw materials of stone, wood, and metal - so the omniscient and all-powerful Lord God builds the most beautiful of His creatures from a rib and its flesh taken from the man. The phrase serves to stress both the care which God takes in the creation of the woman and the intimate connection between the man and the woman.

Previously (vs.19) God had ***“brought”*** the animals He had created to the man to receive their names. The text now deliberately uses the same verb as the process continues with the presentation of the woman. The dramatic paraphrase cited above catches the sense of the text well when it says: *“I have one last creature for you to name. I’d like to know what you think of this one.”* God is like a father who proudly presents his son with a precious gift that is bound to please him and be cherished by



him. This presentation culminates the process of education through which God has patiently conducted the man.

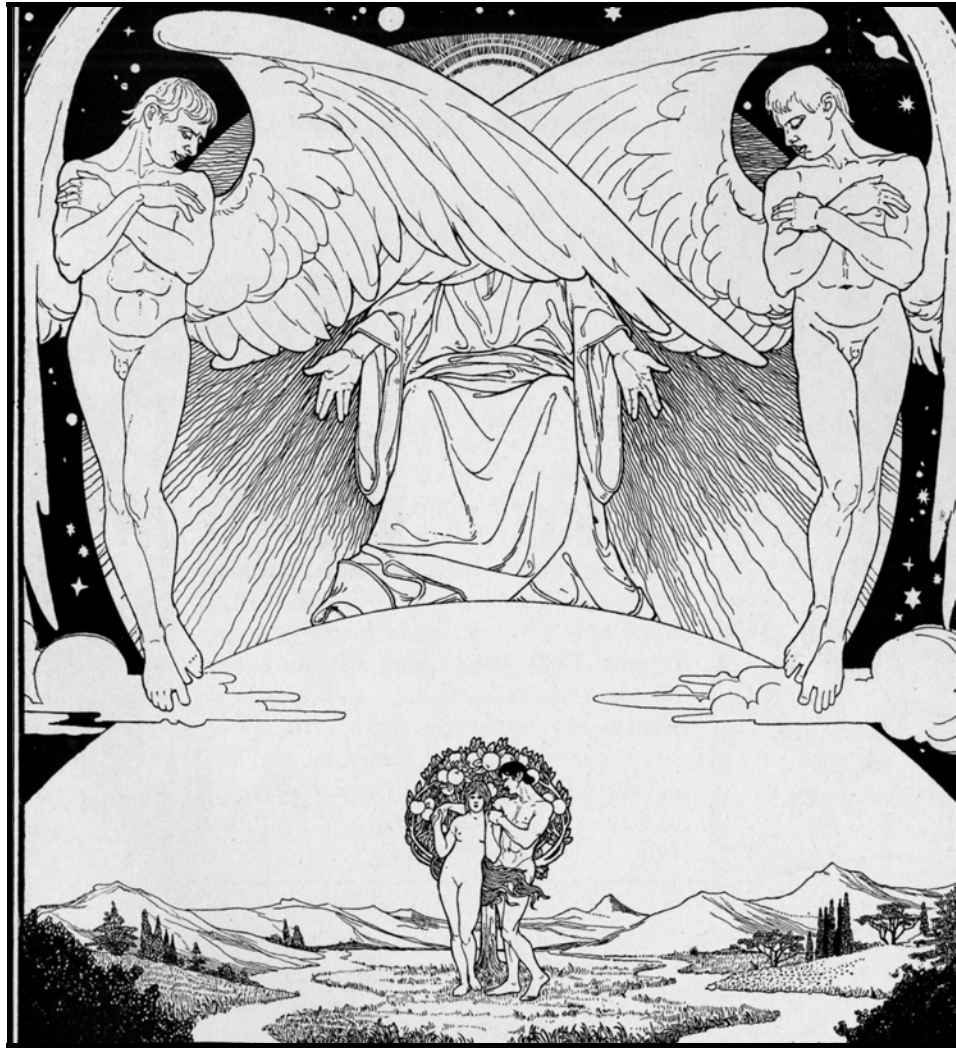
***“The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.”*** - God’s patient tutoring has accomplished its purpose. The man’s jubilant response to the presentation of the woman whom God had created are the first recorded human words. In ecstasy, man burst forth in poetry upon meeting his perfect helper/counterpart. With amazement and joy Adam receives this wonderful, beautiful creature from the hand of God.

The man acknowledges the uniqueness of God’s gift - ***“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”*** The close connection between Adam’s response and the event’s which preceded it is carefully maintained in the original text. The Hebrew literally says - *“This one, this time, is...”* clearly indicating that Adam recognizes the contrast between the woman whom God has made and all the other animals that were brought before him. Once again, Dr. Ortlund’s paraphrase does an excellent job of expressing the intended sense of the text: *“This creature alone, Father, out of all the others - this one at last meets my need for a companion. She alone is my equal, my very flesh. I identify with her. I love her. I will call her woman.”* The phrase Adam uses to recognize the unity of substance that binds him to the woman becomes the standard expression for close family relationships in the Old Testament. We speak of one’s own *“flesh and blood.”* The Hebrews spoke of relatives as one’s *“flesh and bone.”* (Cf. Genesis 29:14; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 5:1; 19:13-14)

***“She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man.”*** - The meticulous care with which Genesis maintains the balance between sexual equality and distinct gender roles is once again evident in the text. It is not the woman’s prerogative to choose her own name. Instead the man now exercises his responsibility/authority by naming the woman whom God has created. Having affirmed the substantial equality which exists between men and women, Adam expresses his headship by choosing the woman’s name. And yet, the very name he chooses recognizes her as his exact counterpart. Carl Lawrenz summarizes; *“Adam gave testimony to the unity of the human race and paid joyful tribute to the dignity of woman as a being like him. He acknowledged that she was not inferior, yet also not identical, but fashioned from his bones and from his flesh to be a fitting complement and helper.”* (Lawrenz, p.286)

Both in English and in Hebrew the words “man” (Hebrew - “ish”) and “female” (Hebrew “ishah”) are closely related to one another. It is as though Adam were declaring, *“This wonderful creature and I are alike. She deserves to bear my name.”* It is also significant to note that Adam does not yet give the woman a personal proper name. That will only come later in Genesis 3:20. Instead, the man declares that a “class name” will be given to her and to all who through and with her will constitute this class. In this way the text reminds us that these are not events that involve only two individuals. Adam and Eve are the parents of the race, and the patterns set here will effect every human being who comes after them. Nor may these truths merely be applied to husbands and wives. Adam and Eve were man and woman before they were husband and wife.





*“Adam and Eve in Paradise” by E. M. Lilien*

***“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*** - The institution of holy marriage described in this verse is the natural and inevitable result of the careful manner in which God created man and woman for each other. While Genesis distinguishes between the creation of humanity as male and female (Genesis 1:27) and the joining of the first man and woman in marriage (Genesis 2:24), the two events remain closely connected with one another. Human sexuality was created for marriage, and the love and commitment of marriage find their natural expression in the sexual relationship of husband and wife. Carl Lawrenz notes:

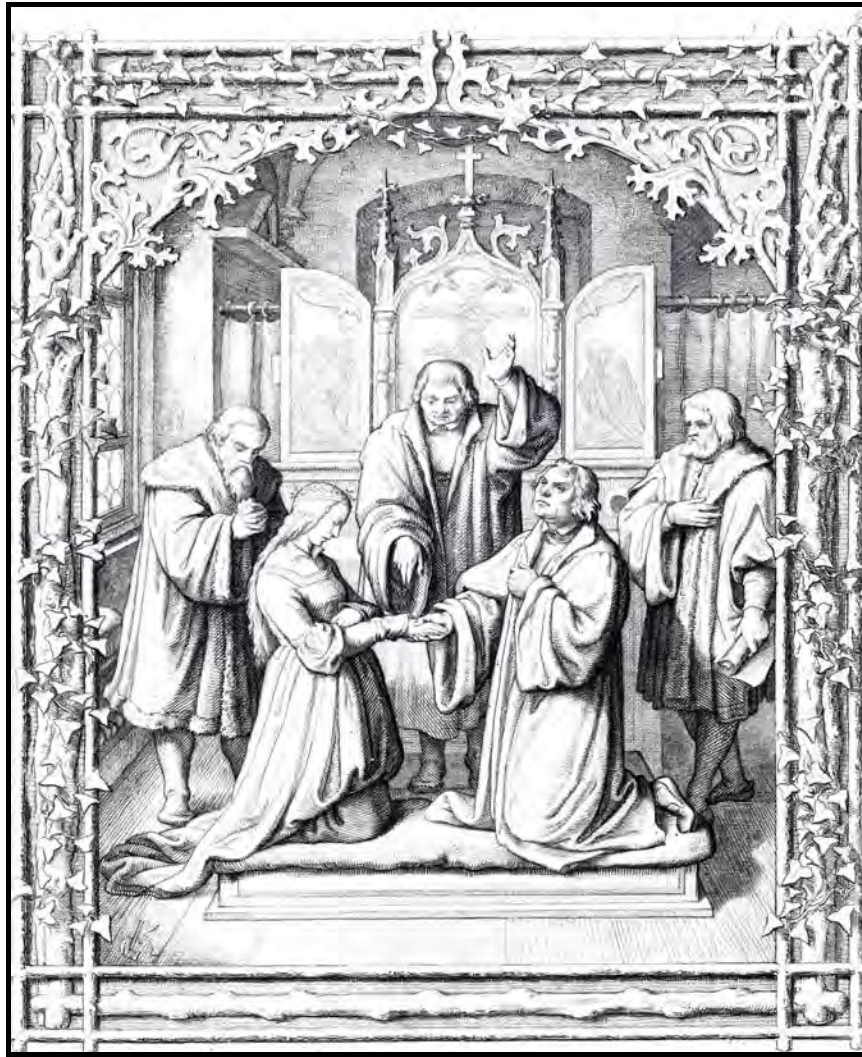
*“Thus, marriage is not the mere product of human progress or social development. Neither does it lie within man’s option to modify*

*marriage, to terminate it at will, and to develop different lifestyles to take its place. No marriage is bound up with the very creation of mankind.”*  
(Lawrenz, p.287)

The observation here expressed is a comment by Moses, the divinely inspired narrator, applying the principles of the first marriage to every marriage that will follow. Moses uses the identical Hebrew phrase (“*al ken*”) repeatedly in Genesis to insert his own comments in the narrative, explaining the origin of an existing custom or institution by assigning it to some specific event in the past. **“He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; that is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.”** (Genesis 10:9) **“That is why it was called Babel - because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world.”** (Genesis 11:9) **“But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it. (That is why the town was called Zoar.)”** (Genesis 19:22) **“Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.”** (Genesis 32:33). In Matthew 19:4-5, Jesus quotes from and comments upon this passage, properly attributing the words to God Himself, for he who speaks by divine inspiration, speaks the very Word of God:

**“Haven’t you read,” He replied, “that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh?” So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.”**

**“A man will leave his father and his mother...”** - The text provides a Biblical definition of marriage including the three crucial components of this divine institution. First of all, **“a man will leave his father and his mother.”** Marriage marks the beginning of a new family unit. At the time of marriage, a person’s relational priorities change. When people fail to recognize the necessity for that change, strained and difficult relationships can exist. Before we marry, our first relational obligations are to our parents - afterwards they are to our spouse. In our culture where the duties of children to their parents are often ignored altogether this may not appear to be a major point. But in traditional societies like ancient Israel where honoring parents is the highest human obligation next to honoring God this is a most significant statement. The *“leaving”* in this phrase is relational not physical. It was customary in Israel for the man to remain in his father’s household throughout



*“The Marriage of Martin Luther and Katrina von Bora”  
by Gustav König*

his life. Typically, it was the wife who left her family to join her husband and his family (i.e.. Rebekah - Genesis 24).

**“And be united to his wife.”** - The second component in this definition stresses the complete commitment of husband and wife to one another. The Hebrew verb *“dabaq”* describes a permanent, indissoluble bond between two people. The words could literally be translated *“sticks to his wife.”* The same language is used in Genesis 34:3 where Shechem’s passionate infatuation with Dinah is described in the words *“His soul stuck to Dinah.”* The same word is often used to describe Israel’s covenant relationship with the Lord. For example, Moses urges Israel: **“Fear the Lord your God and serve Him. Hold fast to Him and take your oaths in His name.”** (Deuteronomy 10:20; cf. also 11:22; 13:25). Bonhöffer correctly asserts that this phrase is *“The profoundest way possible of describing the depth and*

*seriousness of belonging to one another.*” (Bonhöffer, p. 68). Marriage is the only human relationship that involves total commitment without exemption, restriction, or limitation of any kind. After hearing Christ’s sweeping assertion of that unlimited commitment, the disciples understandably react: **“If this is the situation between a husband and wife it is better not to marry.”** (Matthew 19:10) Even the intimate bond of parent and child includes the reality that the child will eventually grow up and become more independent. In a sinful world, the complete commitment of marriage provides the security which enables total intimacy and openness to occur between husband and wife. Such intimacy entails risk. That risk will only be taken in the context of complete commitment. Our culture has devised a *“no fault - no responsibility”* view of marriage as a convenience which may be dissolved at the whim of either partner. By eliminating commitment as the basis for marriage, we have inadvertently eliminated the possibility of experiencing the fulfillment and satisfaction of real intimacy. As a result, divorce is epidemic, and serial polygamy, that is, a succession of marriage partners, one after another, is becoming increasingly common.

**“And they will become one flesh.”** - The third component in Scripture’s definition of marriage is, in a sense, the goal and purpose of the other two. Hebrew scholar Nahum Sarna reflects this reality In the Jewish Publication’s Society’s *Torah Commentary*, when he translates the phrase *“so that they become one flesh.”* The Hebrew phrase literally describes the act of sexual intercourse in which the love and commitment of the two marriage partners is physically expressed. *“The ultimate belonging to one another is undoubtedly seen here in connection with man’s sexuality...Sexuality is nothing but the ultimate realization of our belonging to one another.”* (Bonhöffer, p. 68) This is the basic purpose of human sexuality according to the Bible. As previously noted, the creation of humanity as male and female is closely linked in Scripture to the concept of the image of God. Our capacity for love is the result of our creation in the image of the God Who is love. In the rest of the animal kingdom, physical pleasure and procreation are the motives for sex. But for human beings, although both of these motives apply in a secondary way, there is much more involved. For husband and wife, sex is the physical enactment of their love for one another and their commitment to one another. Apart from such love and commitment, sexual activity is nothing more than the pursuit of selfish personal pleasure which reduces my partner to the status an object through which I achieve my own desire. The New Testament labels such behavior as *“fornication”* (Greek - *“pornia”*) and warns that this sin is damaging in a uniquely personal way - striking



*"The Presentation of Eve" by William Blake*

at the heart of our identity as creatures first fashioned in God's own image: ***"Flee from sexual immorality ("pornea"). All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you Whom you have received from God?"*** (1 Corinthians 6:18-19). It is God's intent that husband and wife experience complete intimacy and openness with one another to the extent that they, in effect, become one person. This intimacy finds its most concrete expression in the sexual relationship of husband and wife. To Corinthian Christians caught up in the non-Biblical asceticism of their culture, St. Paul writes:

***"The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise***



***the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.***” (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)

To sever the marriage bond by divorce is, in effect, to tear that one person apart all over again (cf. Matthew 19:6)

***“The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.”*** - The scene closes with one more glimpse of perfect Eden before the intrusion of evil. Adam and Eve lived in complete innocence. Their sexuality was completely natural and uninhibited - free of sin's distortion. This reference to their nudity without shame stands in stark contrast to their situation after the fall into sin (cf. Genesis 3:7-11). The Hebrew word *“arummim”* (***“naked”***) anticipates the introduction of the fall narrative which follows immediately in the text. There the serpent is presented as ***“crafty”*** (Hebrew - *“arum”*)



***“The Wedding Day” by Alexander Fick***

## *Excursus - The Bible on the Role/Relationship Between Men and Women*

Contemporary culture has demonstrated an unfortunate tendency to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness and femaleness. This trend has been tremendously destructive on generations of young people who have been taught to depreciate their gender and to view their male and female personhood as nothing more than a distinction in physical configuration. As a result, they literally do not know what it means to be a man or a woman. This pattern has not resulted in the liberation of women. On the contrary, it has brought frustration and unhappiness to men and women alike. Its societal consequences include the weakening of marriage, more sexual promiscuity, more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, and more women abandoned by the fathers of their children who are struggling to raise a family alone as single parents.

The Bible teaches that God created men and women equally in His image with uniquely different roles to play in relationship with one another. Scripture contends that an understanding of this equality and of these distinctive roles is of crucial significance both for personal fulfillment and societal stability. They are a part of *“the very structure of created existence”* (*“Women in the Church”*, p. 21) as it was designed by God in the beginning (*“Order of Creation”*). To deny or defy the divine Order of Creation is to invite frustration, suffering and chaos in our individual lives and throughout society.

*“God’s gift of complementary manhood and womanhood was exhilarating from the beginning (Genesis 2:23). It is precious beyond estimation. But today it is esteemed lightly, like the rainforests we need but do not love. We believe that what is at stake in human sexuality is the very fabric of life as God wills it to be for the holiness of His people and for their saving mission to the world.”* (Piper/Grudem, p.60)

We have observed the major emphasis placed upon this truth in the creation texts of Genesis and the care with which the balance between equality and role distinction is maintained. Scriptural doctrine in this area may be summarized under the following principles:

1. God created man and woman of equal worth and importance in His own image.

The divine image gave man and woman equal status in their relationship to their Creator (Latin - “*coram deo*”).

*“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* (Genesis 1:26-27)

*“Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of the Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”* (Colossians 3:1)



*“The Firstborn” by Alexander Fick*

*“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Galatians 3:26-28)

2. Woman was created by our loving God to complement man, like him and yet unlike him, neither complete without the other. Kenneth Matthew explains the woman’s role as “*a helper suitable*” in this way:

*“She is called Adam’s helper which defines the role that the woman will play...There is no sense derived from the word linguistically or from the context of the garden narrative that the woman is a lesser person because her role differs. In the case of the Biblical model, the helper is*

*an indispensable partner required to achieve the divine commission. "Helper," as we have seen from its Old Testament usage, means the woman will play an integral part, in this case, in human survival and success. What the man lacks, the woman accomplishes...The woman makes it possible for the man to achieve the blessing that he otherwise could not do alone. And, obviously, the woman cannot achieve it apart from the man.*" (Matthews, p. 214)

God created man and woman to "*fit together*" in every way. The difference between man and woman is infinitely more profound than discrepancies in physical configuration. Our identity as a man or a woman involves every part of who we are emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually. It impacts how we think, feel, perceive reality and relate to other people. Emil Brunner contends that the physical differences between man and woman are merely an outward reflection of more profound difference. They are a "*parable of psychical and spiritual differences of a more ultimate nature*" which involve the "*deepest metaphysical ground of our personality.*" (Piper/Grudem, p. 34). These gender differences are deliberately complementary, each providing abilities and insights which the other lacks, designed by the Creator God to enhance and enrich human life. As men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, follow the live in accordance with God's design presented in His Word, we are most satisfied and He is most glorified.

***"The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him...So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man."*** (Genesis 2:18-22)

***"In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.*** (1 Corinthians 11:11)

3. In love, God ordered distinct male and female roles for the man and the woman to whom He had given equal status. These roles established God's unchanging will for the relationship of man and woman with each other. Man is to be the loving, self-

sacrificing head (Greek - “*kephale*”) of the woman. Woman is to be the man’s helper, freely subordinating (Greek - “*hupotasso*”) herself to his leadership as one equal to another.

***“Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”*** (1 Corinthians 11:3)

***“As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission as the Law says.”*** (1 Corinthians 14:33-34)

***“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior. Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.***

***Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word.”*** (Ephesians 5:22-26)

***“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”*** (1 Timothy 2:11-14)

***“Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the Word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives when they see the purity and reverence***



***“The Christian Mother” by Alexander Fick***

***of your lives...For in this way, the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, and called him her master.”*** (1 Peter 3:1-2.5-6)

4. The essence of Biblical “*headship*” is the exercise of responsibility/authority. The concepts of authority and responsibility are always closely associated in Scripture. The proper exercise of authority from the Bible’s perspective is never merely the power to command or control. The right to exercise authority comes from God and always includes a willingness to accept responsibility for the welfare of that over which authority has been granted. In this view, authority is the power to carry out and implement responsibility and can never be separated from it. Responsibility without authority results in impotence, frustration, and failure. Authority without responsibility results in the abuse of power as a means of self-assertion, domineering, and dictatorship. For believers, the exercise of authority is an opportunity for selfless service (cf. Matthew 20:25-28). It is to be carried out with a Christlike attitude of self-sacrificing love, humility, and obedience to the will of God (Philippians 2:5-8; Ephesians 5:25-29). John Piper offers the following definition of “*headship*” in the context of the role/relationship between man and woman - “*a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to man’s differing relationships.*” (Piper/Grudem, p. 36)

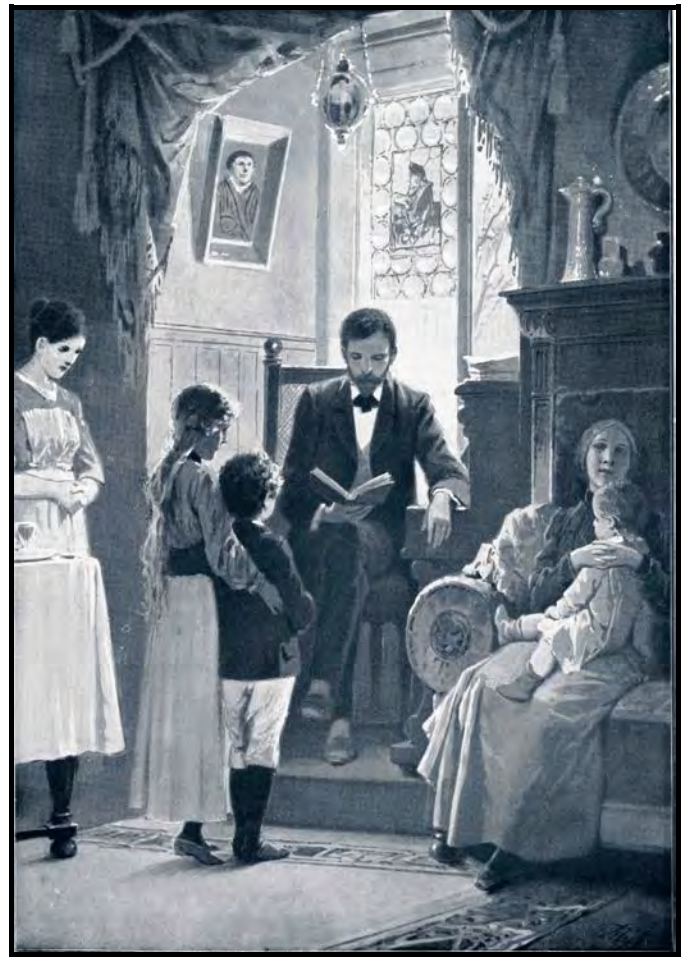
5. The counterpart to “*headship*” is “*submission*” (Greek - “*hupotasso*”). As previously noted (cf. p. 164-165), this word refers to the voluntary acceptance of an assigned role or position within an ordered structure under the authority of another in service of a higher goal or purpose. It is the willingness to forego self-assertion and the insistence upon one’s own rights in deference to the leadership of another. The affirmation of that leadership and obedience to it - within the limits of conscience and primary loyalty to Christ - is clearly integral to Biblical submission (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-7).

In Scripture’s perspective, submission is not a sign of weakness but of strength, an indication of profound spiritual maturity. Submission is the action of one equal in regard to another:

*“The submission of the wife to her husband is not that of an inferior to a superior. The woman is joint heir (with the man) of God’s promises; she, like the man, bears the image of God and as a Christian will be conformed to Christ’s image. The different roles husband and wife have*

are set by God's design. That the woman and man are equal in being is reinforced by the command to wives. Wives are to **submit themselves** (reflexive); their submission is voluntary, self-imposed. It is part of their obedience to the Lord; the Lord is the One Who commands it, not the husband." (Foh, 187)

The Bible uses the physical image of the head to illustrate the man's role/relationship to the woman. Using the same type of imagery, it could be said that the woman is to be the heart, that is the loving, caring center of the marriage and the family. To accomplish this role God has endowed women with remarkable sensitivity and emotional depth and strength. Dr. Wayne Grudem offers the following clarifications of the nature of Biblical submission in a world where both headship and submission have been distorted by selfishness and sin:



*"The Christian Father" by Alexander Fick*

*"Submission does not mean putting a husband in the place of Christ...Submission does not mean a wife should give up efforts to influence and guide her husband...Submission does not mean a wife should give in to every demand of her husband...Submission is not based on lesser intelligence or competence...Submission does not mean being fearful or timid...Submission is not inconsistent with equality in Christ."*  
(Piper/Grudem, pp.194-196)

6. God's design for the roles of man and woman in relationship to one another is indicated by the manner in which man and woman were created by God in the beginning (Genesis 2: 7,18,22). This truth is clearly attested in the New Testament: ***The head of the woman is the man...for man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*** (1 Corinthians 11:3,8-9); and, ***"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority***

*over a “man; she must be silent...For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”* (1 Timothy 2:12-13).

The risks inherent in overturning the Creator’s intent in this crucial area are illustrated by the fall into sin (Genesis 3:17) - *“And Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through the birth of the child if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.”* (1 Timothy 2:14-15). Thus, in Lutheran theology, this role/relationship has historically been designated as an *“Order of Creation.”*

7. While the Biblical role/relationship between man and woman finds its fullest expression in the close union of marriage (cf. Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7), God ordered these roles for man and woman in His creative plan before He united them in marriage and before they fell into sin. The man did not begin to be a man only upon his marriage to the woman nor did the woman begin to be a woman only upon her marriage to the man. Masculinity and femininity are rooted in who are as individual persons by nature. They are not simply reflexes of the marriage relationship. Therefore, God’s assigned roles apply beyond the marriage relationship to men and women in every period of history and are to be expressed in ways appropriate to men and women’s different relationships.

8. The Bible teaches that the church, the *“household of God”* (1 Timothy 3:15), bears a special responsibility to reflect God’s will for man and woman to the world. In a society where the assertion of individual rights and the exercise of personal power have devastated marriage and family, God’s people are called to provide a model of self-sacrificing love, demonstrating manhood and womanhood as the Creator designed them to be. Therefore, Christian men are to accept the responsibility/authority for the church’s public leadership and teaching, both in the pastoral office and the governing assemblies of the congregations. Christian women are to refrain from any activity in the church which would constitute a public exercise of authority over men or which could be construed by society as a rejection of the divinely ordained role/relationship between man and woman (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-38; 1 Timothy 2:9-15). The application of the headship/submission principle to the activities of women in the church is restrictive only in regard to the public exercise of authority by women over men. Women are by no means excluded from the service of the Lord but are encouraged to direct their service in a way that





*“At Oma and Opa’s House” by Alexander Fick*

is in accordance with the role/relationship between men and women as set forth in creation and defined in Holy Scripture. The church must remain constantly vigilant that its doctrine and practice in this crucial and always controversial area be determined solely by the Word of God, not the ever-changing views and values of human culture. The consequences of cultural accommodation here are potentially devastating for marriage and family throughout society.

9. The headship/submission principle applies throughout our lives in all of the differing relationships that men and women have with one another. However, in the



*“Eve, the First Mother - With Her Sons Cain and Abel” 14<sup>th</sup> Century Italian Painting*

*live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” (1 Peter 3:7)*

absence of specific Biblical directives like those which apply the headship/submission principle to marriage, family, and the church, much must be left to conscientious Christian judgment when it comes to applying this principle in other areas.

10. The role/relationship between man and woman has been twisted and distorted by sin. The happiness and harmony which was God’s design for man and woman has been replaced by selfishness, contention, domination and rebellion (cf. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:12,16). As Christians are restored to the image of God by faith in Jesus we are enabled to live in our God given roles for His sake (cf. Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1). Christian men are called upon to recognize that in such a world the humble submission expected of Christian woman places her in a position of vulnerability which is often abused. Therefore, the submission of the godly woman is to be received with consideration and respect: ***“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you***

+ + +



*“The Fall Into Sin” by Rudolf Schäfer*

## ***Genesis Chapter 3 - The Fall Into Sin***

### ***Genesis 3:1***

***Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”***

***“Now”*** - The conjunction indicates sequence without revealing duration. Scripture give no direct indication of how long after the creation of man and woman the fall into sin occurred. Those who argue for a brief sojourn in paradise cite the absence of any reference here or elsewhere in the Bible to the details of Adam and Eve’s life in the garden. On the other hand, the reference in Genesis 3:8 to God’s walking in the garden in the cool of the evening as an ordinary or routine activity suggests that our first parents dwelt in Eden long enough to settle into a customary pattern of activity. In the absence of more specific Biblical evidence we must be content with the general

conclusion that Adam's time in Eden was probably brief, in all likelihood no more than a few weeks or months. Martin Luther contends that the fall took place only a few hours after man's creation on the seventh day of the creation week. The reformer is motivated by a desire to emphasize the nature of the Sabbath as a day for the preaching and hearing of God's Word and to identify the devil's temptation as an assault upon that divine Word. The text offers no compelling reason for such a severe restriction of the schedule of events. Luther allows that *"nothing certain can be proposed on this matter"*:



*"The History of Paradise" by Lucas Cranach the Younger, 1541*

*"But here another question arises, on which we touched above, namely, about the time of Adam's fall. When did he fall, on the seventh day or on another? Although nothing certain can be proposed, I can readily imagine that he fell on the seventh day. On the sixth day he was created; Eve likewise was created toward evening or near the end of the sixth day, while Adam was sleeping. Early in the morning of the seventh day, which had been sanctified by the Lord, God speaks with Adam, gives him directions concerning his worship, and forbids him to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the real purpose of the seventh day; that the Word of God may be preached and heard. Henceforth, both in Scripture and in common usage the practice remained that the morning time was set aside for prayer and preaching, as Psalm 5:3 says, 'In the morning I shall stand before Thee and I shall see Thee.'" Thus, early on the seventh day Adam appears to have heard the Lord charge him with*

*the management of household and world affairs, and at the same time forbid him to eat the fruit. Satan was most intolerant of this magnificent creation and arrangement. He also envied man such great bliss, that an overflowing supply of everything was available for him on the earth and that after so blissful a physical life he had the sure hope of eternal life, which Satan himself has lost. And so, perhaps about noon, after God's conversation, he also converses with Eve. So it is wont to be to this day. Where the Word of God is, there Satan also makes it his business to spread falsehood and false teaching; for it grieves him that through the Word we, like Adam in*

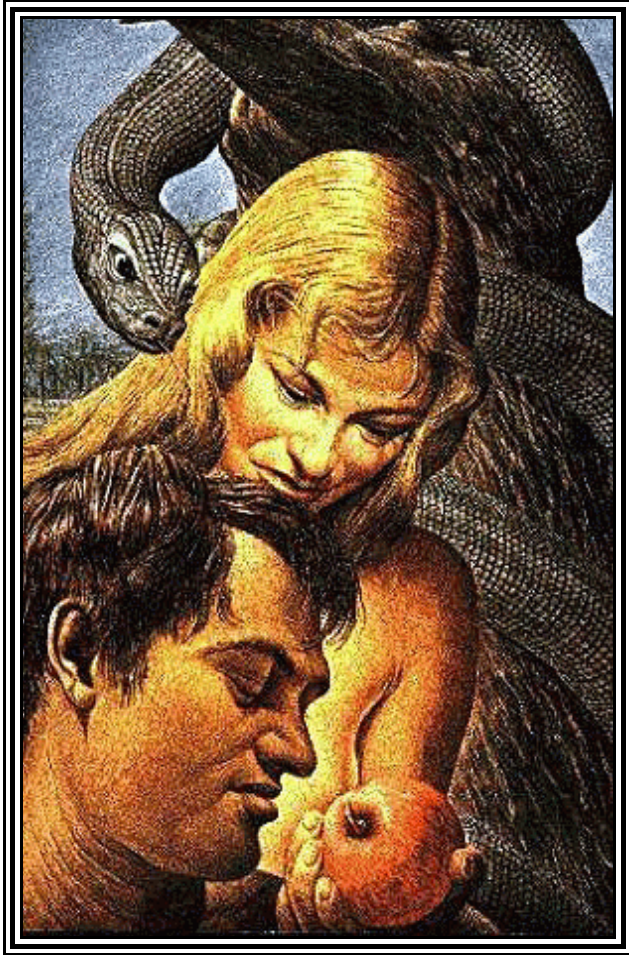
paradise, become citizens of heaven. And so he successfully incites Eve to sin. Moreover, the text also states plainly that when the heat of the day had ended, the Lord came and condemned Adam, together with all his descendants, to death. I am easily convinced that all these events took place on that very Sabbath - and that one not yet complete! - on which Adam lived in paradise and enjoyed its fruits....As for the historical event of which Moses gives us an account in this present chapter, I stated my opinion before, that this temptation appears to have taken place on the Sabbath; thus Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day, Adam earlier and Eve toward evening. Early on the following Sabbath, Adam preached to Eve concerning God's will; that the most gracious Lord had created the entire paradise for the use and enjoyment of people; that, also as a result of His extraordinary goodness, He had created the tree of life, through the use of which the powers of the body would be refreshed and perpetual youth would be maintained; that one tree - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, from which it was not permitted to eat - was forbidden; and that in this respect they should obey so gracious a Creator. Perhaps he led Eve about in paradise and showed her the forbidden tree and said this. In this way, Adam and Eve, resplendent with innocence and original righteousness, and abounding in peace of mind because of their trust in God, walked about naked while they discoursed on the Word and command of God and praised God, just as should be done on the Sabbath. But then, alas, Satan interfered and within a few hours ruined all this, as we shall hear." (Martin Luther, AE,1, pp.81-82,144)

While the restriction of man's time in Eden to less than 24 hours seems somewhat arbitrary, the view that mankind's stay in paradise was relatively brief is fully consistent with the Biblical evidence.

***"The serpent was more crafty than any of the animals the Lord God had made."*** - The Tempter is introduced in the form of a serpent (Hebrew - "nahas"). The text uses



***"Temptation" by Franz von Stuck***



*“The Fall Into Sin” by Coleman*

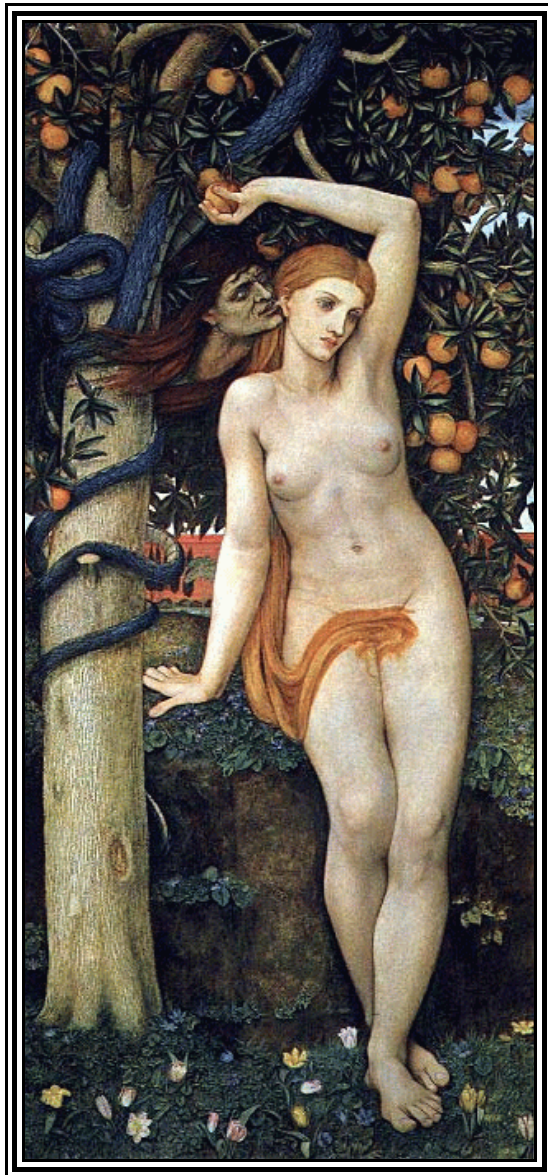
the most common Hebrew term for a venomous snake. It occurs 31 times in the Old Testament. The origin of the word may be onomatopoeic, derived from the hissing sound of a snake. Nahum Sarna observes:

*“The serpent has always been a creature of mystery. With its venomous bite, it can inflict sudden and unexpected death. It shows no limbs, yet it is graceful and silently agile. It glassy eyes - lidless, unblinking, strangely lustrous - have a fixed and penetrating stare. Its longevity and the regular recurring sloughing of its skin impart an aura of youthfulness, vitality, and rejuvenation. Small wonder that the snake simultaneously aroused fascination and revulsion, awe and dread.”* (Sarna, p. 24)

The word **“serpent”** carries an ominous, somewhat sinister connotation, drawn from a root which refers to sorcery and divination. This linguistic association is no doubt the result of the widespread use of serpents in ancient magic and incantation. At the same time, the reverse may well also be true, that the widespread use of serpents in magic and incantation is the result of the serpent’s role in humankind’s fall into sin. The same negative term appears in Moses’ categorical prohibition of occult practices among the Children of Israel:

***“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out these nations before you.”*** (Deuteronomy 18:10-12; cf also Genesis 30:27; 44:5,15; Leviticus 19:26)

The Bible's consistently negative view of serpents may well be the result of the pivotal role played by the serpent in the Genesis temptation account. This is reflected in Psalm 58's comparison of the wicked to venomous snakes: ***“Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies. Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears, that will not heed the tune of the charmer, however skillful the enchanter may be.”*** (Psalm 58:3-5). This negative focus continues throughout Scripture, culminating in the reptilian monsters which represent the devil and his kingdom in St. John's visions in the book of Revelation (cf. Revelation 12 & 13).



***“The Serpent Beguiling Eve”  
by Stanhope***

Serpents figure prominently in the mythology of the ancient Near East in a variety of roles. The ***Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*** summarizes those various roles in this way:

*“The snake can appear in many roles; as an adversary or a protector; a deity or a demon, and can signify life and regeneration or death and non-existence...Traditional Near Eastern associations with the snake include associations with danger and death, with magic and secret knowledge, with rejuvenation and immortality, and with sexuality.”* (DDD, pp. 744-746)

This disparity can be clearly seen in the mythology of Egypt. To the Egyptians, the rearing cobra was the sign of royalty and sovereignty. The pharaoh's crown was adorned with the *“Uraeus”* (from the Greek word *“ouraios”* - *“cobra”*), a golden cobra with its hood outstretched, ready to strike down the king's enemies. This menacing

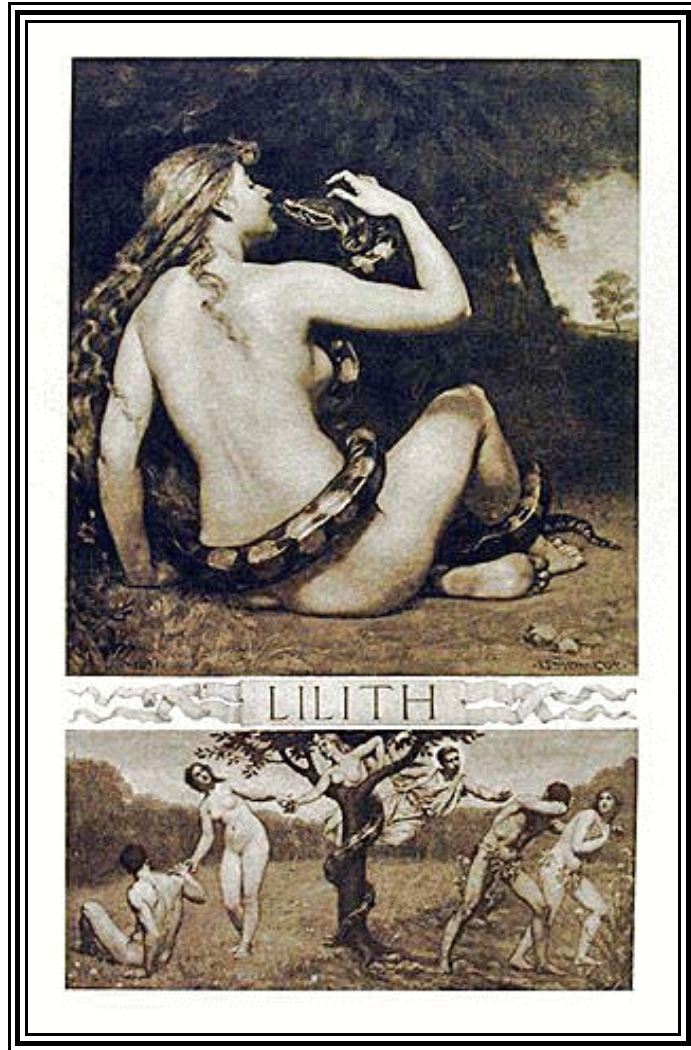
emblem represented the gods' protection of the divine pharaoh. The Egyptians also worshiped "*Ouroboros*", the "*Tail-swallower*," whose body encircled the universe, marking the boundary between order and chaos. But at the same time, darkness and death were represented by "*Apophis*," the demon serpent who rose up from the waters of the Nile each day to attempt to destroy the sun god "*Ra*" and plunge the world into everlasting night. Each day the evil snake is destroyed by the magic of Horus and Thoth, but he cannot be killed. On the next day he rears up again to personify the forces of darkness and death. The prominence of serpents in the book of Exodus in connection with Israel's liberation from bondage in Egypt is no doubt connected to these powerful myths (cf. Exodus 4:1-5; 7:8-13; Numbers 21:4-9). Among the idols of the Canaanites, the serpent was primarily a phallic symbol, associated with Baal's consort, the fertility goddess "*Asherah*" as a sign of rejuvenation, rebirth, and sexuality.

***"was more crafty than any of the animals the Lord had made."*** - The significance of the adjective "***crafty***" in reference to the serpent is somewhat unclear. The word is ambiguous. It can be used in a positive sense. King Saul acknowledges that David is "***very crafty***" because of his clever resourcefulness in eluding the king's pursuit (1 Samuel 23:22). In the Book of Proverbs it describes the virtuous characteristics of "***prudence***" and "***shrewdness***." (Cf. Proverbs 12:23; 13:16; 14:8) However, in Job the same word is used in a negative context to denote someone who is "***cunning***" or



***"The Craft of the Serpent" by Franz von Stuck***





*“The Serpent’s Seduction” by Kenyon Cox*

“crafty.” (Cf. Job 5:12; 15:5) How any of these characteristics might be attributed to a serpent is difficult to imagine. Some commentators suggest that the reference may be to the attractive appearance of a snake with its glittering skin and graceful motion. Given the events which follow and the diabolical cleverness of the temptation, it seems best to conclude that the reference is not to the serpent as such but to the cunning spirit who conceals the ugliness of his evil beneath the beguiling beauty of the serpent’s form. The Hebrew word is “arum” (“crafty”) which sounds very much like the word “arumim” (“naked”), used in the preceding verse to describe the innocence of Adam and Eve prior to the fall. The English reader misses the pun, which in the original text serves to highlight Adam and Eve’s perilous vulnerability. To carry the acoustic similarity over into English we

might say: “They sought to make themselves shrewd but all they learned was that they were nude.”

The text unmistakably indicates the origin of the serpent as a part of the creation - **“than any of the animals the Lord had made.”** This is crucial in a cultural context where serpents were widely worshiped as gods or goddesses. There is no hint of dualism here. The devil is not some sort of supernatural divine force in his own right independent of and equal to the Creator God. In the beginning there was God and God alone. Everything else that exists has its origin in Him. Satan is not an autonomous being. He is a creature like everything else in the entire universe - *“all things visible and invisible.”* (Nicene Creed).

The devil is never explicitly mentioned in the text of Genesis 3. The menacing evil of his presence, however, can be sensed throughout the text. The New Testament leaves no room whatsoever for doubt as to the true identity of the deceiving serpent. The New Testament's references to Satan's direct involvement in man's temptation and Fall are repeated and explicit:

***“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth for there is not truth in him. When he lies he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of the lie.”*** (John 8:44)

***“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ...For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”*** (2 Corinthians 11:3, 12-13)

***“The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the world astray. He was hurled to the earth and his angels with him.”*** (Revelation 12:9)

***“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”*** (Revelation 20:1-2)



*“The Fall of Satan” by Gustav Doré*

### ***Excursus - The Origin and Identity of Satan***

***“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 1:8***

The Bible teaches that the devil and his demons are fallen angels who at the dawn of time committed the sin of pride, rose up in rebellion against God, and were cast out of heaven. In a taunting dirge inspired to celebrate the impending downfall of the mighty king of Babylon, the prophet Isaiah seems to allude to the Satanic power which lurks behind the earthly mask of Babylon's monarch. The arrogant pride of the earthly ruler is but the lesser reflection of unimaginable hubris of the magnificent angel whose name was "*Lucifer - the Morning Star:*"

***"How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, Son of the Dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations. You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned upon the mount of assembly, on the utmost***

***heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit."*** (Isaiah 14:12-15)

A similar series of allusions is found in Ezekiel's mocking lament over the future demise of the proud king of Tyre, the great trading city of the Phoenicians. The language of the dirge appears to transcend the pagan earthly king to identify the dark spiritual power who rules through him and uses his avarice and greed to enslave him in the cause of wickedness. Ezekiel details the breath-taking splendor of the magnificent guardian cherub who dwelt in the highest heaven:

***"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you; ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You***

*were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until wickedness was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:12-19)*

The English lyric poet, John Milton captures the sense of these texts well in his epic *Paradise Lost*. Milton, through the goblin guardian of hell’s gate, describes Satan with these telling words: (Milton, p. 51) *“Art thou that Traitor Angel, Art thou he, who first broke peace in heaven and faith, Till then unbroken, And in proud rebellious arms drew after him the third part of heaven’s sons, Conjured against the Highest, For which both thou and they outcast from God Are here condemned to waste eternal days in woe and pain?”*



*“Lucifer Before the Fall”*



*“Satan in His Original Glory” by William Blake*

St. Paul alludes to pride as the reason for Satan’s downfall in his instructions on the selection of bishops: ***“He must be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”*** (1 Timothy 3:6) The apostle Peter uses the downfall of the devil and his angels as an illustration of God’s inability to overlook or tolerate sin. ***“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”*** (2 Peter 2: 4,9). A similar reference is included in the brief letter of Jude near the end of the New Testament: ***“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains on the great day.”*** (Jude 6)



*“Satan the Accuser of Mankind”  
Detail from a 1556 Woodcut by Jacob Lucius*

Satan is known by many names and titles in Scripture each of which are descriptive of his nature and his nefarious work. The English “*Satan*” is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun “*satan*” which means “*the Adversary*” or “*the Accuser.*” The term as a proper noun referring to the devil occurs in Job 1:6-9,12; 2:1-4,6-7; 1 Chronicles 21:1; and Zechariah 3:1-2. The vision of Zechariah is particularly effective in depicting the role of Satan as a malicious accuser who stands before God the Judge as a prosecuting attorney and demands the damnation of man, represented in the vision by Joshua, the high priest.

*“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire.” (Zechariah 3:1-2)*

The Apocalypse of Zephaniah, written in the second century A.D., expands and

illustrates the role of Satan as the accuser of humanity. It tells of the demonic angels of the accuser who record all of men's sins for their masters use:

*“Also the angels of the accuser who is upon the earth, they also write down all the sins of men upon their manuscript. They also sit at the gate of heaven. They tell the accuser and he writes them upon his manuscript so that he might accuse them when they come out of the world and down there.”* (Apocalypse of Zephaniah 3:8-9).

In the visions of Zephaniah's Apocalypse Satan appears as *“A mighty angel...His hair was spread out like a lionesses. His teeth were outside his mouth like a bear. His hair was spread out like a woman's. His body was like the serpents when he wished to swallow me.”* (Apocalypse of Zephaniah 6:8)

At times, the Greek of the New Testament simply transliterated the Hebrew title *“Satan”* into the Greek word *“satanas.”* More frequently, however, the Greek word *“diabolus”* - *“devil”* is used as its equivalent. The word *“diabolos”* literally means *“the slanderer”* and thus melds easily into the Old Testament view of Satan as the malicious accuser of humanity.

The devil's nature as a creature of rebellion who will submit to no authority or law is expressed in the Hebrew title *“Belial.”* St. Paul refers to the devil as *“Belial”* in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 - ***“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?”*** *“Belial”* appears frequently in the Old Testament (cf. Deuteronomy 13:13; Judges 19:22; 1 Samuel 1:16; 2:12; 2 Samuel 20:1; Proverbs 16:27). It literally means *“without a yoke”* (which may explain its unique use in the 2 Corinthians 6 text). In this sense it signifies rebelliousness, lawlessness, and unrestraint. *“Belial”* is the one who refused to acknowledge the authority of God but rose up in rebellion against him. He is the angel who - to use Milton's phrase from *Paradise Lost* - found it *“Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.”* (1, l. 261).

The enemies of Christ accuse the Lord of casting out demons by the power of ***“Beelzebub, the prince of demons.”*** (Matthew 12:22-36; cf also Matthew 10:25; Mark 3:22; Luke 11: 15-19). The title appears to originate as the designation of a Canaanite idol - *“Baal - Zebub”* which means *“the Lord of the Flies.”* The deity in question was believed to have the ability to cure or to cause disease (cf. 1 Kings 1:2-



6,16). The flies who served him were the purveyors of pestilence and death. By New Testament times, the title had evolved into a designation for Satan in his role as the Prince of the hosts of hell.

Many of the devil's designations in Scripture are directly descriptive of his activities. He is *"your enemy"* (1 Peter 5:8); *"the deceiver of the whole world"* (Revelation 12:9; a *"murderer"* and *"the father of lies"* (John 8:44); the *"tempter"* (Matthew 4:3); the *"god of this world"* (2 Corinthians 4:4); the *"unclean spirit"* (Matthew 12:43); and, the *"wicked one"* (Matthew 13:19).

The Bible warns that the devil is a powerful foe whom we dare not underestimate (Matthew 10:28; 1 Peter 5:8). He is served by a vast host of demons, that is, angels who joined in his rebellion against God and were expelled along with him from heaven. *"Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' 'My name is legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.'"* (Mark 5:9) Christ's

ability to cast out demons throughout his earthly ministry is indicative of the victory of God over the kingdom of Satan. The devil is not God's equal. Nor is he capable of acting independently on his own authority. He always operates within the constraints of God's power. To use Luther's phrase, he is *"Gottes Teufel"* - *"God's Devil."* (Cf. Job 1:6-12) Even his most diabolical schemes ultimately serve the plans and purposes of the sovereign God (cf. Genesis 50:20). The Word of God assures Christians that this fearsome enemy has been defeated. Standing firm in the faith, we have a share in Christ's victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7)



*"Baphomet - the Devil" by Eliphas Levi, 1896*

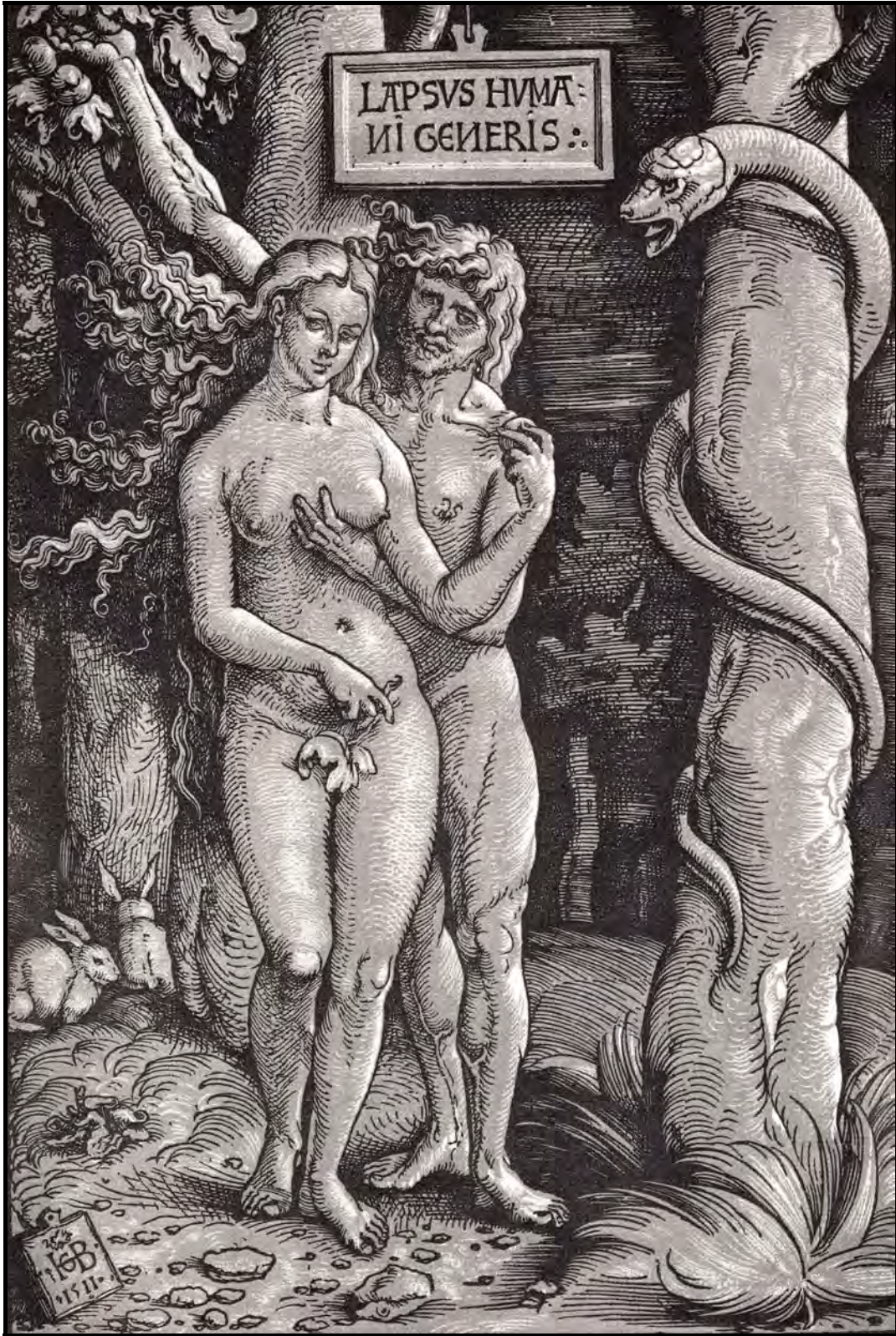
***“He said to the woman...”*** - With a word, Satan attacks the Word. Luther has contemptuously noted that in his presumption to be God’s equal the Devil has become *“God’s Ape,”* that is, he imitates or mimics all that God does - *“Monkey see - Monkey do!”*. So also in this instance.

*“In the first place, Satan imitates God. Just as God had preached to Adam, so also he himself preaches to Eve. What the proverb says is true: ‘Every evil begins in the name of the Lord.’ Therefore, just as from the true Word of God salvation results, so also from the corruption of the Word of God damnation results...Satan spoke in order to lead them away from what God had said.”* (Martin Luther, AE, I, p. 147)

The text provides no indication as to whether the serpent’s ability to communicate verbally was the supernatural result of its possession by the devil or a natural ability by which the Edenic animals were capable of communicating with man prior to the Fall into sin. Those who assume the former generally also suggest that one of the reasons why the devil chose to approach Eve rather than Adam might have been that as a relative newcomer in the Garden she would have been unaware that snakes were not normally capable of indulging in verbal communication and would therefore not have been alarmed by the approach of a talking serpent. On at least one other occasion a dumb animal was supernaturally provided the ability to speak in human language - namely when Balaam’s ass demonstrated more spiritual perception than its owner (Numbers 22:28).

Speculation about the devil’s motive for approaching the woman rather than the man ranges from castigation of women as the weaker, more vulnerable sex by chauvinists to the feminist assertion that woman was more intelligent, aggressive and sensitive than man and so the devil approached her because she was more likely to see the logic of his argument. Self-styled *“Biblical feminists”* Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty argue that Eve is to be commended because she *“alone leaped to God’s defense when Satan sought to discredit the deity”* and that her downfall was noble because it resulted from a desire to *“adorn her mind and to quench her thirst for intellectual knowledge.”* (Scanzoni & Hardesty, pp. 46-47) Both chauvinist and feminist fail to detect the diabolical cleverness of Satan’s approach to Eve because their own philosophical presuppositions blind them to the content of the text.

The creation narrative in the preceding chapter had provided a detailed description



*“The Fall of the Human Race”  
by Hans Baldung Grien - 1511*

of the time and attention which the Lord God devoted to the creation of humanity as male and female and the careful establishment of the headship/submission principle which was to govern the role/relationship between them. This attention is indicative of the crucial importance of that principle in the structure of God's creation, as we have previously noted. The devil's strategy reflects his awareness of the profound significance of this issue. Satan's goal is to seduce mankind into rebellion against God. He achieves that goal not through a frontal assault but through a subtle oblique attack, using the headship/submission principle as his focus. By approaching Eve the devil challenges the headship of Adam and entices the woman to step out of her assigned role and act unilaterally on behalf of humanity. Robert Ortlund summarizes this satanic strategy as follows:

*“As the God-appointed head, Adam bore the primary responsibility to lead their partnership in a God glorifying direction. This may explain why Satan addressed Eve rather than Adam to begin with. Her calling was to help Adam as second in command in world rulership. If the roles had been reversed, if Eve had been created first and then Adam as her helper, the serpent would doubtless have approached Adam. So Eve was not morally weaker than Adam. But by his approach to Eve Satan struck at Adam's headship. His words had the effect of inviting Eve to assume primary responsibility at the moment of temptation: ‘You decide, Eve. You lead the way. Wouldn't you rather be exercising headship?’ Just as Satan himself fell through this very kind of reasoning, so he used it to great effect with Eve. Presumably she really believed she could manage the partnership to Adam's and her own advantage, if only she could assert herself.” (Ortlund, p. 108)*

The recognition that the devil is cleverly using the issue of Eve's submission to Adam as a crucial dimension of his temptation helps to clarify a number of details in the Fall narrative. In the Hebrew text of the conversation the pronouns and verbs used by the devil in addressing Eve are plural. This is not evident in the English since the second person pronoun “you” is identical in singular and plural forms. **“You must not eat...You will not surely die...your eyes...you will be.”** Since he is speaking to a single individual these words would normally be singular in form. But instead they are plural. The devil is subtly enticing Eve to decide and act not only for herself but for humanity. The Hebrew pronoun is also plural in Eve's reply - **“We may eat...”**. She has, perhaps unconsciously, presumed to act as the spokesman (person?) not only for herself, but also for her husband. However, later in the chapter, when God calls

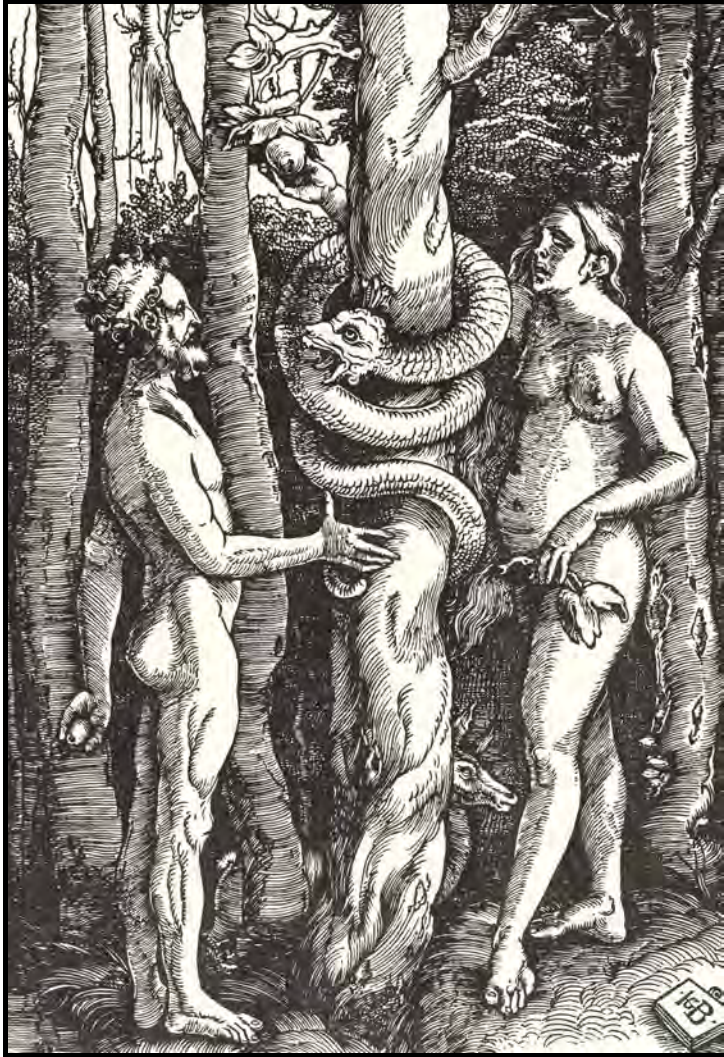
humanity to account, He uses the second person singular masculine pronoun, addressing Adam specifically and individually. Adam, as the head, bears unique responsibility for what has happened - ***“But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’”*** (second person, masculine, singular) (Genesis 3:9). It is Adam who must answer for that which has taken place.

Note also that it is only after Adam sins that the nature of humanity changes and guilt and shame become a part of the human reality (vs. 7 - ***“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”*** Mankind does not become sinful with Eve’s fall but with Adam’s, thus indicating once again Adam’s unique role and responsibility as the *“head”* of the entire race (cf. Romans 5: 12-21; 1 Timothy 2:11-15).

In vs. 17, God Himself characterizes the significance of what has occurred as a failure on Adam’s part to exercise the headship for which he had been created. Take careful note of God’s opening words to Adam - ***“To Adam He said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree...”***

When the forbidden fruit is actually eaten the text seems to place particular emphasis on the fact that it is Eve who takes the initiative and is, in fact, in clear command of the situation as the man follows meekly along, accepting the leadership of the woman: ***“She took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”*** (Vs. 6)

Thus, a careful reading of the Bible’s account of the Fall plainly revealed the crucial role which Adam and Eve disregard for the headship/submission principle played in their destruction and the downfall of their race. Eve usurped Adam’s headship and led the way into sin. Adam not only failed to intervene to save his wife, but abandoned his post as head altogether by passively following the leadership of his wife. The purpose of this clear emphasis in the text is not to shift the blame to woman or to minimize male responsibility for the Fall. The portrait of man painted in this chapter is in no way flattering. At the critical moment, when strong, decisive leadership was called for, the first man was weak and uncertain, following the easy path of least resistance as he followed a course set by others. The basic blame falls upon Adam because of his responsibility as the head. Eve was deceived. Adam



*“The Temptation of Adam and Eve”  
by Hans Baldung Grien - 1514*

forsook his role/responsibility. Both were wrong and together they pulled the human race down into sin and death.

*“Did God really say...”* - The Tempter’s assault opens with an attempt to create doubt in the woman’s mind about the Word of God. Bonhoeffer aptly characterizes these words as *“the first religious question in the world...the Satanic question par excellence, the question which robs God of His honor and aims to divert man from the Word of God.”* (Bonhoeffer, p. 73,75) The attempt to undermine to the credibility of God’s Word is classic Satanic strategy: raise questions about the Word, generate uncertainty and confusion, and proceed from there. Luther points out that such doubt is the source of all sin:

*“In short, all evils result from unbelief or doubt of the Word and of God...The source of all sin truly is unbelief and doubt and abandonment of the Word. Because the world is full of these, it*

*remains in idolatry, denies the truth of God and invents a new God.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, 148-149)

The devil’s clever phrasing is not so much a question as it is a sympathetic expression of shock and surprise. The intent is to cast Satan as man’s friend and advisor whose only concern is humanity’s happiness and welfare, while simultaneously depicting God as cruel and repressive.

The devil significantly omits the covenant name of God - *“Jahweh”* - with its connotation of faithfulness and love. Instead the Enemy uses only *“Elohim”* - the

generic designation of a distant deity. “*Elohim*” suggests God’s power rather than His love, which is precisely the devil’s intent.

***“You must not eat from any tree in the garden?”*** - The Deceiver’s cunning exaggeration is a total travesty of God’s original generous permission (cf. 2:16). A positive invitation is thus transformed into a negative prohibition. The obvious intent is to portray God as a capricious tyrant who had surrounded man with delicious abundance and then spitefully forbidden him to enjoy it. This is again classic Satanic strategy - to convince man that God’s law is designed to hold man down: to keep him in his place: to prevent the experience of human self-fulfillment and pleasure. By planting this insidious seed of doubt, the Enemy traps Eve into looking at God in an entirely new way. Instead of believing that love is the motive for everything that God has done, the woman now begins at least to wonder whether the law of God might indeed be repressive. The focus subtly begins to shift from God to self and with that shift the abyss of sin opens at the woman’s feet.

### ***Verses 2-3***

***The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”***

***“The woman said to the serpent...”*** - The woman fails to perceive the trap concealed in Satan’s clever words. By accepting the validity of his question, she allows the ***“Father of Lies”*** (John 8:44) to define the issue and direct the conversation. This mistake ensures her ultimate downfall. The Gospel accounts of the temptation of Jesus (cf. Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) deliberately parallel the Genesis account of the temptation of Adam and Eve. They are designed to be read together so that the contrast between them can be observed. Our Lord succeeded where Adam and Eve had failed because He did not repeat their mistakes. In the Gospels, Christ’s answers do not seem to correspond to the devil’s questions. That is because Jesus penetrates behind the devil’s facade of falsehood and misrepresentation to deal with the real issues at stake. Unlike Mother Eve, Jesus refuses to allow the devil to control the conversation. Instead, He consistently relies upon the Word of God. Three times, the Lord fires back at Satan - ***“It is written!”*** In the end, the Enemy who had scored an easy victory in Eden is sent reeling back in defeat.

***“We may eat from the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must***



*"The Temptation of Eve" by Max Klinger*

*must not touch it*" is added. It is impossible to determine whether this addition comes from Adam, based on the unprovable assumption that he alone heard God's original

*not eat from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."*

The woman's answer is defensive and indicates a number of ominous indications of her already muddled thinking. It is evident that the devil's attempt to put her off balance has at least partially succeeded. Note the following:

(1.) The lavish generosity of God's original gift - *"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden..."* (2:16) is reduced to the level of mere, perhaps grudging permission - *"We may eat from the trees in the garden."* (3:2). Eve might more accurately have said: *"Oh no, snakey, you've got it all wrong. Our loving God made all of this just for us. Its richness, abundance and beauty are evidence of His boundless love for Adam and I."*

(2.) Eve fails even to mention the most wonderful of all God's gifts, the tree of life which stands at the heart of the garden. This is the clearest and most unmistakable demonstration of God's love for humanity.

(3.) The Hebrew text indicates that Eve has adopted the devil's language in referring to God. She does not call Him *"Jahweh,"* the God of grace and love; but *"Elohim,"* the God of power and might.

(4.) God's prohibition is both enlarged and weakened. First of all, the threat *"And you*



command and later conveyed it to Eve - or from Eve herself. The threatened punishment - **“for when you eat of it you will surely die (2:16)** is watered down to **“or you will die.”** On this seemingly minor point Luther remarks:

*“This is a striking flaw and one that must not be overlooked; for it shows that she has turned from faith to unbelief. For just as a promise demands faith, so a threat also demands faith. Eve should have maintained; ‘If I eat I will surely die.’ On this faith Satan makes such inroads with his crafty speech that Eve adds the little word ‘perchance.’ She had been persuaded by the devil that God is not so cruel as to kill them for eating the fruit. To this extent Eve’s heart was now poisoned with Satan’s venom.”* (Martin Luther, AE, I, p. 155)

If one doubts the severity or the certainty of punishment, one is much less likely to be deterred from the crime. John Calvin agrees that this slight shift in wording is profoundly significant:



*“Eve” by Lucien Levy-Dhurmer*

*“Only in proclaiming the punishment does she begin to give way, by inserting the adverb ‘perhaps.’ ...I willingly embrace the opinion that the woman was beginning to waver. Certainly, she had not death so immediately before her eyes, should she become disobedient to God, as she ought to have had. She clearly proves that her perception of the danger of death was distant and cold.”* (Calvin, p. 149)

The flaws and omissions in Eve’s response signal the inroads which Satan has already achieved. Already, at the beginning of this ill-fated conversation the fatal damage has been done. Leupold summarizes:



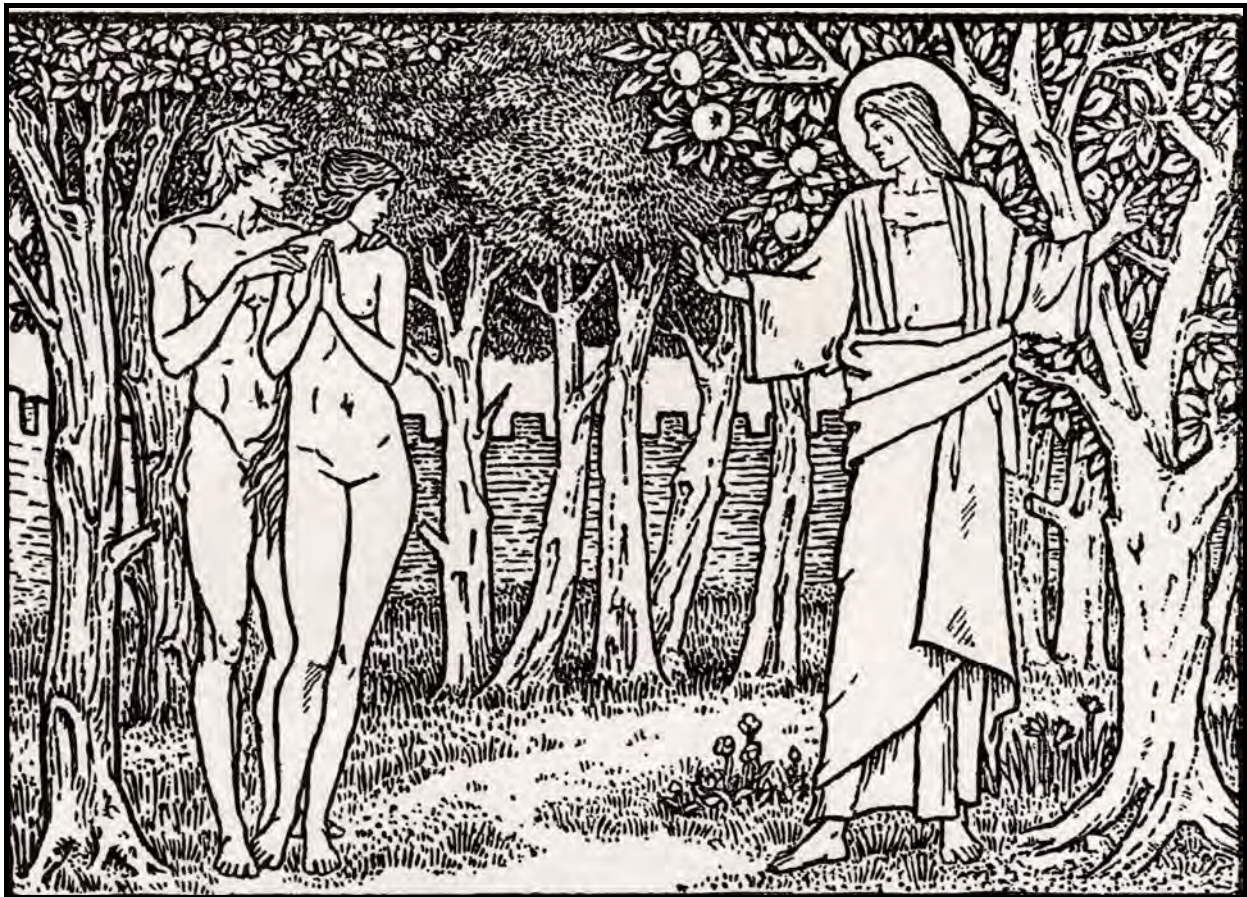
*“The Fall Into Sin” by E.M. Lilien*

*“Already the attitude of the heart to God is seen no longer to be one of perfect trust. The suspicion which Satan so cleverly suggested was allowed to take root. To have suspicions about God and His goodness is a wicked insult to His majesty. All this, it is true, does not at once appear in its most fully developed form. But the first steps on the road away from God have been taken. Here the Fall took place.” (Leupold, I, p. 148)*

### **Verses 4-5**

***“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”***

***“You will not surely die...”*** - In the face of Eve’s crumbling defense, the devil now



***“God Forbids the Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”  
by Edward Burne-Jones***

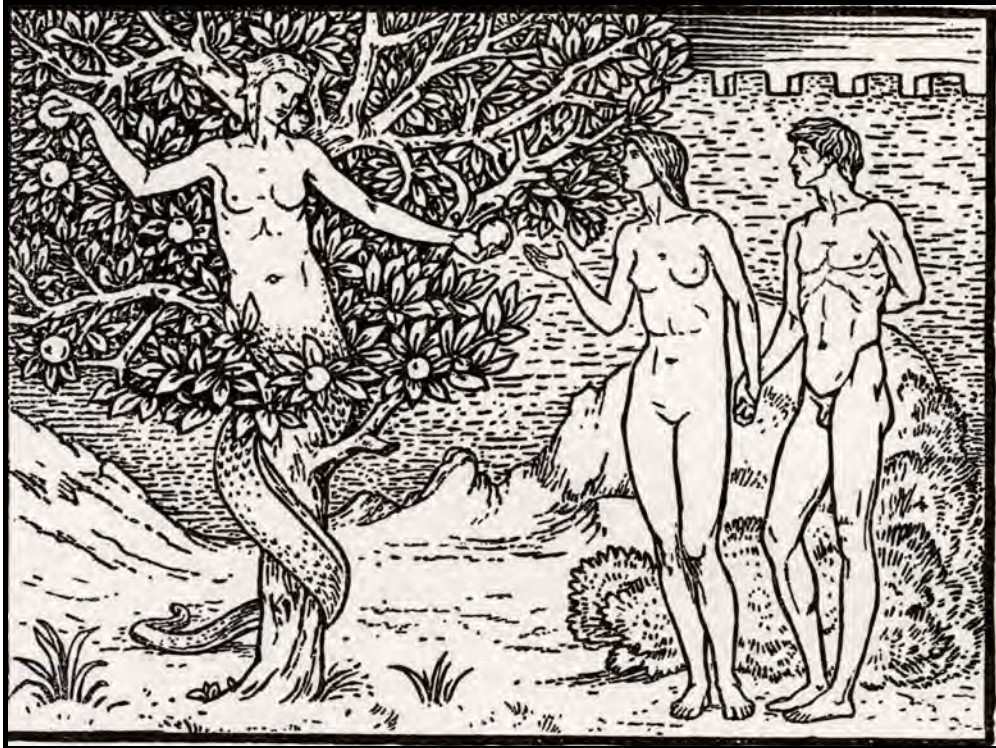
presses his attack with a bold, outright denial of the Word at the precise point where the woman is wavering. As he now, perhaps inadvertently reveals, the devil was never in any doubt as to what God had actually said. He, in fact, quotes God's words more accurately than Eve herself had repeated them. This is not about clarification but contradiction. The choice confronting Eve should now be clear - Believe the Word of God or believe the word of the Father of Lies. . But in the swirling confusion of the moment, nothing seems clear to Eve any longer. The devil's denial of the truthfulness of God passes without objection. Luther argues that the same deadly progression observed here can be common to all temptation:

*“Therefore we see here what an awful thing it is when the devil begins to tempt a man. One lapse involves another lapse; and an apparently slight wrong brings about a prodigious lapse. It is something serious to turn away from God and from His Word and to lend her ears to Satan. But what is something far more serious now happens; that Eve agrees with Satan when he charges God with lying, and, as it were, strikes God in the face with his fists. Therefore, Eve no longer shows any aversion, as in the first temptation; but she joins with Satan in despising God and denying the Word of God.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 156)

***“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*** - Lest the woman be startled by the outright denial of God's Word, the devil hastens to offer his own explanation of God's motive in this matter. His ascription of self-serving motives to God in this matter serve to undermine the Lord's credibility and render his own explanation all the more plausible.

The subtle ambiguity of the serpent's words reveal his shrewdness. He does not directly demand that the woman eat of the forbidden fruit. Instead he seduces her with a careful concoction of half-truth, outright falsehood, and slander. He purports to offer an alluring glimpse into the mind of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer insightfully points out that the real temptation here is the presumption that God can be known apart from His Word and that man himself can decide whether the Word accurately reflects the truth about God. The serpent's clever questions and denials *“suggests to man that he should go behind the Word of God and establish what it is by himself, out of his own understanding of the being of God.”* (Bonhoeffer, p. 73) The deadly presumption here is that *“Man is expected to be judge of God's Word instead of simply hearing and doing it.”* (Bonhoeffer, p.74)

Satan suggests that the path to human self-realization and fulfillment lies not in obedience to God but in defiance of His will. Having denied the truthfulness of God, he now denies His love. *“The law of God is not an expression of His love for you and His concern for your happiness,”* the serpent slyly hisses. *“Rather, God’s law is intended to suppress you and prevent you from standing on an equal basis with Him.”* This blasphemous appeal to human pride is irresistibly flattering - *“Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God.”* Victor Hamilton explains:



*“The Fall Into Sin” by Edward Burne-Jones*

*“Deification is a fantasy difficult to repress and a temptation hard to reject. In the woman’s case, she need give in to both only by shifting her commitment from doing God’s will to doing her own will. Whenever one makes his own will crucial and God’s revealed will irrelevant, whenever autonomy replaces submission and obedience in a person, that finite individual attempts to rise above the limitations placed upon him by his Creator.”* (Hamilton, p. 190)

Luther makes the same point in his *“Large Catechism”* when he contends that every sin, no matter which particular divine command is transgressed, is in its essence a violation of the First Commandment. When he chooses to disobey the Word of God

a man becomes his own god. *“You see, then, how the First Commandment is the fountainhead and source of what flows through all the rest; to it they all again return as to the source upon which they all depend, for here in this First Commandment, the end and the beginning are firmly looped and linked together.”* (LC, p. 82) Satan is blurring the essential difference between the Creator and the creature. He himself suggests as much when he slyly suggests - **“You will be like God.”** He has led Eve to the point where she has begun to think of herself as God’s peer - a being in a position to assess for herself the accuracy or applicability of God’s command. John Jeske summarizes the devil’s deceit in this way:

*“God had been unbelievably generous to Adam and Eve, but there was one thing He had not given them - equality with Himself. They were not God. God had designed them to live under Him not alongside Him. Here is the bait Satan dangled before Eve’s eyes, knowing that there were no earthly gifts He could offer her that God had not already given His beloved children. Satan had sowed two poisonous seeds in Eve’s heart. First he persuaded her not to take God too seriously. Second, he made her doubt God’s goodness. At that point Satan broke off his temptation. He waited to give his poison time to take effect.”* (Jeske, p. 46)

The devil combines outright falsehood with artfully twisted truth. He suggests that disobedience is the only path to self realization. **“Your eyes will be opened”** he promises. In a distorted sense that was true. Once they had sinned, their eyes were opened (cf. Genesis 3:7). Satan mimics the language of God to enhance his own credibility in contradicting God. God had designated the forbidden tree **“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”** Now the devil insinuates: **“You will be like God knowing good and evil.”** In a tragically ironic way, this too was the truth. Only when they disobeyed would they fully comprehend good and evil, having experienced evil for the first time. Until that moment their knowledge of evil was only theoretical. By their action that knowledge became experiential. God woefully acknowledges the this reality in explaining man’s expulsion from the Garden - **“The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.”** (Genesis 3:22) The devil is telling part of the truth, for as any good liar knows the half-truth is the most effective lie of

all. This new knowledge and the opening of their eyes are not the good things that he suggests them to be. They will not result in liberation and fulfillment. Instead, they will bring the crushing reality of guilt, fear and death. The devil is doing what he does best, lying. Jesus expressed the very essence of the devil's character in His condemnation of the Jews who spurned Him and His Gospel: ***“He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*** (John 8:44)

Kenneth Matthews describes the devil's clever strategy in this way:

*“When set in the larger context of the story, the serpent's words are shown to be both true and false...the serpent's half-truths concealed falsehoods and led the woman to expect a different result altogether. The serpent spoke only about what she would gain and avoided mentioning what she would lose in the process...Although they became like God in this one way, it was at an unexpected cost. They achieved isolation and fear. The couple was cut off as well from the possibility of life...They obtained wisdom in exchange for death.”* (Matthews, p. 237)

### ***Verse 6***

***When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom,***



***“Eve and the Serpent” by Albrecht Dürer***

*she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband , who was with her, and he ate it.*

*“When the woman saw...”* - The spiritual damage which Satan has already managed to inflict now becomes apparent. The woman proceeds to make her decision not on the basis of the Word of God but on the basis of what seems right to her. The devil has already achieved his goal. No further prompting from him is necessary at this point.

*“That the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom.”* - And what does the woman see in her contemplation of the forbidden tree? As Eve gazes in fascination upon the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Satan’s hints and half-truths begin to seem more plausible. Relying solely upon her own powers of discernment, Eve considers the matter. The evil seeds which the Enemy had planted now begin to sprout the poisonous fruit of covetousness and greed.

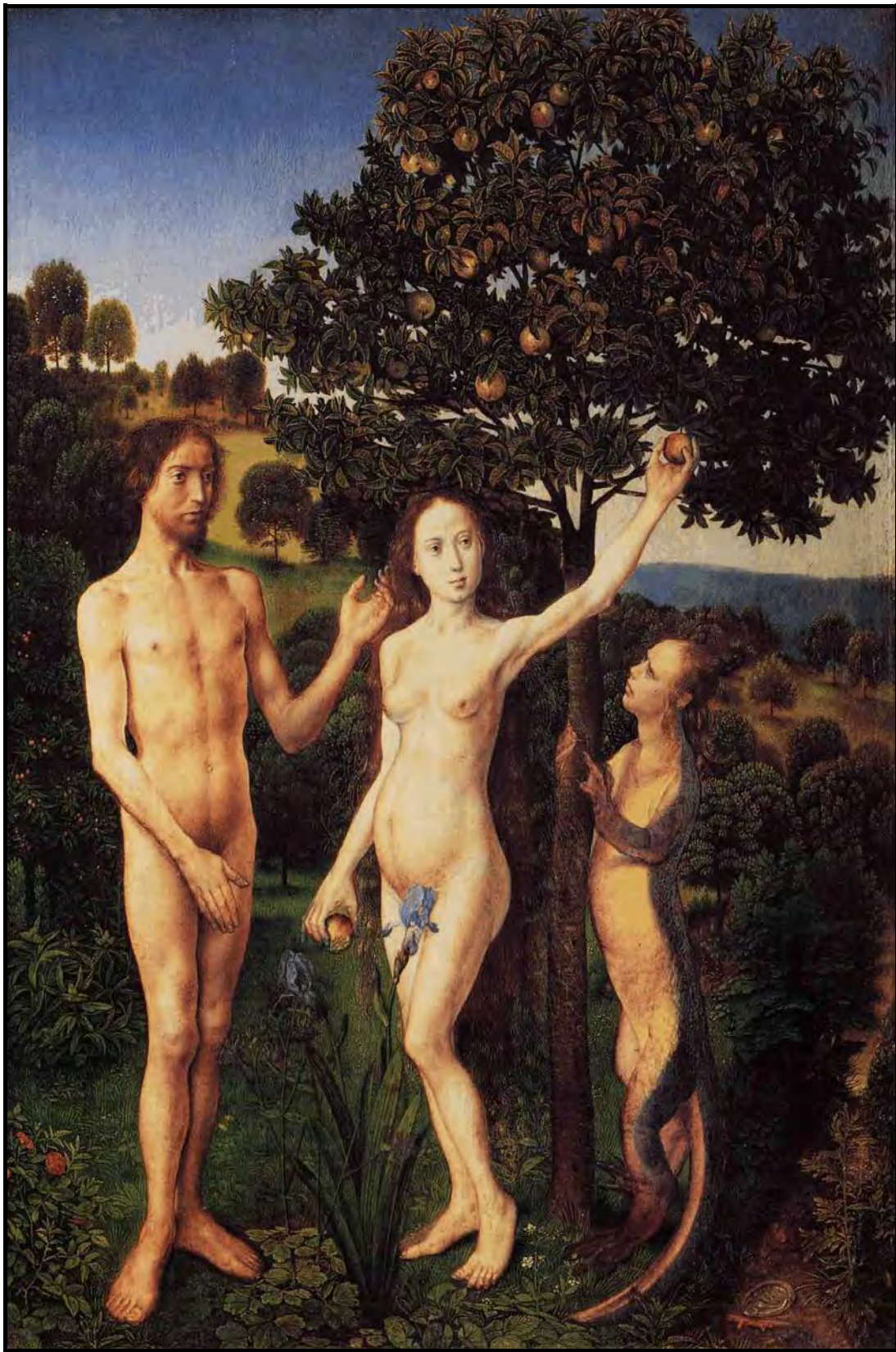
The woman’s assessment is summarized in three phrases - *“good for food, pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom.”* The first phrase - *“good for food”* ironically mimics the language of the Creator who repeatedly endorsed that which He had made with the affirmation - *“And God saw that it was good.”* (I.e. Genesis 1:10) Nahum Sarna notes the quantum shift that has occurred between the woman’s view of goodness and that of God:

*“The word of the serpent prevails over the Word of God. The allure of the forbidden has become irresistible....good has become debased in the woman’s mind. Its definition is no longer God’s verdict but is rooted in the appeal to the senses and in utilitarian value. Egotism, greed, and self-interest now govern human action.”* (Sarna, p. 25)

The forbidden fruit was physically appealing (*“good for food”*) and aesthetically attractive *“pleasing to the eye.”* But most importantly, in terms of the devil’s earlier insinuations, it now seems to the woman that it might indeed be possible to gain wisdom by eating the fruit (*“desirable for gaining wisdom”*). Her willingness to entertain this thought indicates a drastic change in her perception of God.

This threefold description of sin finds an intriguing parallel in 1 John 2:16. John





*"The Fall Into Sin by Hugo van der Goes*

outlines the sinful reality of this world with a similar triple repetition: ***“For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world.”*** Both texts serve to remind us that human sinfulness is much more serious than bad behavior or unfortunate habits. Sin is what we are, not merely what we do. The sinful actions we commit are the result of the evil thoughts and desires of our hearts which, in turn, are the result of our sinful nature. As our Lord asserts:

***“What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”*** (Mark 7:20)

Those who focus only on the external evidences of sin fail to grasp the immensity of man’s dilemma. The particular sins we commit are merely the symptoms of the deadly moral disease which infects all of the naturally born descendants of father Adam. The result of a superficial understanding of human sinfulness is moralism which reduces Christianity to the level of good people do good things, bad people do bad things so do good things in order to be a good person. The Biblical view, illustrated here in the experience of our mother Eve, is that sin begins in the heart and mind. The outward action is the evidence of the inner corruption. Luther’s observations on the text note this pattern well:

*“And this also reveals Satan’s cunning. He does not immediately try to allure Eve by means of the loveliness of the fruit. He first attack’s man’s greatest strength, faith in the Word. Therefore, the root and source of sin is unbelief and turning away from God, just as, on the other hand, the source and root of righteousness is faith. Satan first draws away from faith to unbelief. When he achieved this - that Eve did not believe the command that God had given - it was easy to bring about this also, that she rushed to the tree, plucked the fruit and ate it. The outward act of disobedience follows sin, which through unbelief has fully developed in the heart. Thus, the nature of sin must be considered in accordance with its true immensity, in which we have all perished.”* (Martin Luther, AE, I, p. 162)

***“She took some and she ate it.”*** - The action itself seems almost anticlimactic. The

words of the text are brief and matter of fact. The fall into sin had actually occurred long before Eve plucked the forbidden fruit from the tree.

The identity of the fruit has been the subject of widespread speculation. The Bible does not provide specific identification. Among the rabbis it is commonly assumed that the forbidden fruit was a fig, based on the fact that after the Fall Adam and Eve covered their bodies with fig leaves. “*Genesis Rabba*” a “*midrash*” (rabbinical commentary) written in the fifth century, reports that when, in the aftermath of the fall, Adam attempted to take leaves from the other trees in the Garden they rejected him crying - “*Begone thief, who disobeyed your Creator! You will have nothing from us!*” Only the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil itself allowed him to use its leaves to conceal his nakedness. (Graves, p. 77) The time-honored tradition of Western Christendom that labels the forbidden fruit as an apple may have originated from the similarity between the Latin words for “evil” (“*malus*”) and “apple” (“*malum*”).

**“*She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it.*”** - The woman remains the initiator throughout the narrative of the Fall. Man is curiously and fatally passive through it all. The prepositional phrase “***who was with her,***” combined with the plural pronouns which the devil used throughout his conversation with Eve, appear to suggest that Adam was actually present throughout the temptation. While the Hebrew preposition could be understood more broadly to describe Adam’s presence within the Garden, the immediate context strongly suggests Adam’s physical presence throughout the incident. (Cf. Judges 13:9) Rather than provide the godly leadership which his role as the “*head*” required, he chooses to be a passive onlooker. In his insightful book *The Silence of Adam*, Dr. Larry Crabb notes:

*“Adam, then, was a silent man, a passive man. Like many men in history, he was physically present but emotionally absent. He fades into the background of the story, rather than standing front and center on the stage...His sin began with his silence. He was designed to speak, but he said nothing. He listened to the serpent. He listened to his wife, he accepted the fruit, and then he ate. Adam was passive three times before he ate the forbidden fruit... Adam’s disobedience was a process. Adam was silent, and then he ate from the tree. His disobedience did not begin with his eating but with his silence.”* (Crabb, pp. 91,97)



*“The Fall into Sin” by Peter Paul Rubens*

Adam observed and listened. He did not intervene as Eve plucked and then ate the forbidden fruit. If this was indeed the case, then the man's role in this entire sordid scenario becomes all the more odious. The New Testament asserts that unlike the woman who was deceived by the serpent, the man sinned willfully and deliberately. In using the Fall as an illustration of the peril of defying God's intent for the role/relationship between men and women, St Paul flatly declares: ***"And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."*** (1 Timothy 2:14) The implications of this assertion are mind-boggling, particularly in the light of centuries of male scorn for woman as the *"temptress"* who brought about the downfall of humanity. Adam stood by and watched. He was not deceived by the devil's clever treachery, and yet he was content to allow the woman to proceed. He was content to risk the life of his beloved as a guinea pig in this test of God's judgment. And then, when the woman did not immediately fall dead upon the ground, he quickly snatched the proffered fruit from her hand in his own greedy desire to be like God. In Romans 5, we are told that ***"sin entered the world through one man."*** (Romans 5:12) This text becomes all the more compelling if Adam was a passive observer through Eve's conversation with the serpent. F. Legard Smith offers the intriguing insight that Adam's sin may have, in fact preceded Eve's chronologically: *"The first sin may not have been Eve's when she took the fruit and ate it. In priority of time, the first sin actually may have been Adam's sin in failing to exercise his responsibility as a spiritual protector."* (Smith, p. 47)

### ***Verse 7***

***Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.***

***"Then the eyes of them both were opened"*** - The devil's twisted promise comes true (cf. Genesis 3:5) but with an outcome very different from that which Eve and Adam had expected. They had eaten the forbidden fruit with glittering visions of self-realization and vastly expanded horizons of knowledge. But now with the devastating insight that comes only too late they realize that they have been betrayed. The trickery of the deceitful enemy is revealed as they are overtaken by shame and guilt.

***"And they realized they were naked"*** - Humanity had lost its innocence. In Genesis 2:25 the shameless nudity of Eden indicated a state of uninhibited perfection. But that innocence is now irretrievably gone now. They have the knowledge of good and evil which the serpent had promised but what a sorry knowledge it was! They knew good as something which they had lost. They knew evil as something terrible and accursed

- something which filled them with an unbearable sense of guilt. Having personally experienced evil for the first time their image of themselves has been changed forever. The beauty and grace of the human form which before had been a source of delight and appreciation had mutated into a source of embarrassment and shame. Nakedness has not suddenly become sinful. This text does not forbid nudity nor does it endorse any particular cultural standard of modesty. This husband and wife are alone in the garden and are nonetheless ashamed to be naked in front of one another. This clearly not a matter of mere modesty. The Hebrew word “*arum*” (“*naked*”) sadly echoes the craftiness (Hebrew - “*arum*”) of the satanic serpent in Genesis 3:1. The word is characteristically used in the Bible to describe defenselessness, vulnerability, or humiliation. Thus in Deuteronomy 28 Moses warns the Israelites: ***“Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you.”*** (Deuteronomy 28:47-48). The prophet Job affirms his absolute dependence upon God when says: ***“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart.”*** (Job 1:21) Nahum foretells the utter destruction of the Assyrian city of Nineveh using the same language - ***“I am against you,” declares the Lord Almighty. “I will lift your skirts over your face. I will show the nations your nakedness and the kingdoms your shame.”*** (Nahum 3:5)

***“So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”*** - In their desperation and fear, Adam and Eve frantically attempt to deal with the shame which has overwhelmed them. They are guilty and afraid. They feel guilty about themselves, about what they have become as the result of their sinful disobedience of God. The solution they devise, like all of man’s attempts to deal with the problem of sin on his own, is sadly superficial. Instead of facing the real problem, their disobedience of God and His inevitable judgment upon that disobedience, they indulge in a series of pathetic attempts to hide - to hide from themselves, from one another, and from God. First, they hide their bodies. They are ashamed of themselves and so their guilt focuses on the most personal part of their anatomy, that which distinguishes them from one another as male and female, those organs of their bodies most intimately connected with the expression of love and the procreation of life. As the preceding chapter demonstrated, the capacity and need for love is a crucial component in man’s creation in God’s image. That truth is further indicated

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*“They realized that the very fountainhead of human life had now become corrupted by their disobedience and they became acutely aware of their nakedness. Their children would all be contaminated by the seed of rebellion, so that their feeling of guilt centered especially on*



*“The Fall” by J. James Tissot*

*their own procreative organs. The result was that they suddenly desired to hide these from each other and from God.” (Morris, p. 115)*

The beautiful imagery of salvation as being clothed in the pure white robes of God’s righteousness in contrast to the filthy rags of man’s sin is an allusion to this primeval event. Isaiah’s language unmistakably calls to mind the sad fig leaves of our fallen parents: **“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”** (Isaiah 64:6) In the prophet Zechariah’s vision of Joshua the High Priest, the same imagery occurs:

**“Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments upon you.”** (Zechariah 3:3-4)



This imagery culminates in the magnificent visions of Revelation and the great hosts arrayed in white before the royal throne of God in heaven (cf. Revelation 7:9-17).

The selection of fig leaves appears to have been purely functional. In Hebrew tradition, reflecting the flora of Canaan, fig leaves were the largest leaves among the plants in the Garden and therefore best suited to the task. The term “*coverings*” literally refers to a “*loincloth*.” Its usage here is probably intended to emphasize the skimpiness and inadequacy of the coverings which they fashioned for themselves. Later, in clear contrast, God will provide more comprehensive and durable animal skin “*garments*” for His fallen creatures (Genesis 3:21).

Among the legends of the Jews is the bizarre tradition that the bodies of Adam and Eve were covered with translucent horn-like skin and concealed beneath “*garments of light*.” These coverings were lost after the Fall into sin. “*No sooner had they violated the command given them than the cloud of glory and the horny skin dropped from them, and they stood there in their nakedness and shame.*” (Ginzberg, p. 75)

### ***Verse 8***

***Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees in the garden.***

“***Then the man and his wife***” - This same phrase last occurred in Genesis 2:25's description of the perfect happiness and innocence of Eden - “***The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.***” But what a catastrophic change has taken place since then! Harmony and innocence are gone! They have been shattered by sin. Humanity's perfect happiness has been banished. Now there is only guilt, shame, and fear.

“***Heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day***” - God now approaches, literally “*walking among the trees in the garden,*” the same language used earlier by Mother Eve in her reference to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil “*that is in the middle of the garden.*” (Genesis 3:3) The matter-of-fact way in which the text describes the presence of God in the Garden



*“Adam and Eve Hiding from God” by Edward Burne-Jones*

would seem to indicate that this was routine, a part of the normal pattern of activity for Adam and Eve prior to their fall. It was evidently not unusual for God to visit the Garden near the close of the day to commune with the creatures whom He loved. The Bible’s descriptions of heaven, paradise restored, consistently emphasize that the essence of heaven is the immediate presence of God. As it will be in paradise restored, so it once was in the original paradise of God. Before the Fall, the most precious blessing which our first parents enjoyed was the immediate presence of God their Creator.

The reference to God *“walking in the garden”* is understood by some as an example of *“anthropomorphism,”* that is, talking about God and His actions as if He were a human being. The phrase is commonly used elsewhere in Genesis and throughout the Old Testament in this figurative sense. For example, *“walked with God”* is a favorite expression in Genesis to describe the righteous conduct of the godly patriarchs Enoch

(Genesis 5:22,24), Noah (Genesis 6:9), and Abraham (Genesis 17:1). The same terminology occurs in Leviticus 26:12 as God promises His blessings to the people of Israel - ***“I will walk among you and will be your God, and you will be My people.”***

Moses warned the people: ***“For the Lord your God walks about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that He will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.”*** (Deuteronomy 23:14). Others suggest that in this instance, as is often the case elsewhere in Scripture, God actually assumed physical form to meet with His people on their own level. The adverbial phrase ***“in the cool of the day”*** literally reads in *“in the wind of the day”* utilizing the Hebrew noun *“ruach.”* The NRSV catches the sense of the original well in its translation *“at the time of the evening breeze.”*

***“And they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden”*** - Until now this moment of communion with God at the close of the day had been the highpoint of Adam and Eve’s existence. But this time the Lord’s approach strikes terror into the hearts of the man and his wife. Once again, their response is to hide. First they had hidden their bodies. Now they hide themselves. In a pitiful attempt to evade the God whose command they have scorned and defied they conceal themselves among the trees of the garden. The Hebrew text brings out their guilty terror very clearly. An exact translation would be - *“they scurried for cover.”* Leupold describes the ongoing progression of sin’s aftermath:

*“The second and third major results achieved by their misdeed are portrayed. Mistrust and fear have, for one thing, taken the place of the trust and the free communion with Jahweh that had previously prevailed. Instead of running to Him, they run from Him. Communion with the Heavenly Father is no longer their highest delight. It is shunned as an evil and a vexatious thing. What damage and destruction sin is working from the very moment of its appearance! The other grievous hurt that has afflicted mankind is here set forth as one of the intellect, whereas the one just mentioned had its seat in the affections. The intellect is so disturbed that it fails to perceive for the present - what would have been recognized at once on sober second thought - that man cannot hide himself from God, the omniscient and omnipresent.”* (Leupold, p.156)

Sad to say, the stupidity and folly of sin here demonstrated is in no way an experience unique to Adam and Eve. Their foolish efforts have found legions of imitators among their descendants across the centuries. Bonhoeffer notes this incident as the origin

of human conscience: *“This flight, Adam’s hiding from God, we call conscience. Before the Fall there was no conscience. Man has only been divided in himself since his division from the Creator, and indeed, it is the function of the conscience to put man in flight from God.”* (Bonhoeffer, p. 91)

### ***Verse 9***

***But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”***

***“But the Lord God called to the man...”*** - The omniscient God has no need of information as to man’s whereabouts (cf. Genesis 4:9-10). David proclaims the impossibility of hiding from God in Psalm 139:



***“The Fall of Man” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration***

***“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to You; the light will shine like the day, for the darkness is as light to You.” (Psalm 139:7-12)***

The purpose of God’s question is not to locate man but to draw him forth from his silly, stupid, futile concealment. These are words of tender invitation. *“God is depicted as a gentle father seeking out his own.”* (Matthews, p. 240) Note that the text reasserts the use of the covenant name of God. It is the **“Lord God”** (Hebrew - *“Yahweh Elohim”*), the God of faithful love, who calls to His fearful children. Like the shepherd in pursuit of his lost sheep (Luke 15:3-6), God calls out to His wayward creatures. Scripture is replete with images of the powerful love of God for rebellious mankind. He is the father of the prodigal, standing each night on the roadside, gazing off into the distance, eagerly awaiting the return of his lost son (Luke 15:20). He is the faithful husband who continues to love and care for his flagrantly adulterous wife (Hosea 1-3). He is the weeping Savior, lamenting the rejection of obstinate Israel and the impending destruction of Jerusalem: ***“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”*** (Matthew 23:37) Francis Thompson’s magnificent poem, *“The Hound of Heaven”* describes a man’s lifelong flight from God’s persistent love, depicted in the poem as a relentless hound which will never abandon the hunt.

*“I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down through the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind;  
And in the midst of tears I hid from Him,  
And under running laughter.  
Up vistaed slopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated, adown titanic glooms of chasmed fears,  
From those strong feet that followed, followed after.”*

But in the end it is divine love that conquers as the stubborn rebellious man is finally brought to recognize that’s God’s love for him is a free gift worth far more

than all the empty goals men spend their lives pursuing. The poem concludes with a realistic assessment of the human predicament and God's tender invitation to his wayward child:

*“Strange, piteous, futile thing! Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
See naught but I makes much of naught” (He said)  
“And human love needs meriting: How hast thou merited -  
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
Alack, thou knowest not how little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee Save me, save only me?  
All which I took from thee I did not but take, Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in my arms.  
All which thy child's mistake fancies as lost,  
I have stored for thee at home... Rise, clasp my hand and come!...  
Ah, fondest., blindest, weakest I am He whom thou seekest!”*



*“The Return of the Lost Son to His Father”  
by William Etty*



*“The Fall Into Sin” by E.M. Lillien*

***Verse 10***

***He answered, “ I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”***

***“He answered...”*** - Man reluctantly stumbles forth from his hiding place, and standing shamefaced before the Lord, he mumbles his reply. Adam clearly understands the situation’s gravity. God had asked *“Where?”* but Adam answers *“Why?”* - that is, his response deals with motivation, not location. He feels compelled to explain the reason for his concealment. His answer is a tacit recognition of the abnormality of his actions.

*“We may compare to case to that of a man who comes to chide his little son who misbehaved himself and than hid himself behind the door in order to avoid looking at his father’s angry face; the father, well aware of his son’s hiding place, calls out to him, “Where are you?” meaning “Why are you hiding there? Is that where you should be? Come out here and face me!” (Casutto, p. 156)*

***“I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”*** - These are the first recorded words of fallen man, a pathetic combination half-truth, deception, and poorly attempted deception. Adam seeks to hide his sin behind its consequences, but his improvised answer lacks even basic factual accuracy. He cites shame over his nakedness as the cause for his concealment, but in fact he is no longer naked, for he and his wife have covered themselves with their fig leaf loincloths. While the man acknowledges his fear, he fails to identify the real source of that fear. We should not assume that this muddled response is merely a pretense intended to deceive God. Instead, it may actually reflect Adam’s own inner confusion and self-deception. Sinful man’s assessment of his own spiritual dilemma regularly confuses superficial symptoms or external consequences with substantive causes. We delude ourselves into thinking that band-aid solutions to the consequences of sin can serve as a substitute for honest confession and genuine repentance. Adam failed to recognize the tragedy inherent in newfound fear of God. He, alone among all the animals was created in God’s own image to experience the wonder of God’s love and to live forever in perfect harmony with Him. All that is gone now, destroyed by his sin. Because of that sin he cowers in fear before the God whom he was made to love.

### ***Verse 11***

***And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”***

***“And He said...”*** - In the manner of a patient teacher, God seeks to help the man understand what has taken place. The Lord’s design is to lead the man to recognize and to confess his sin so that he may experience repentance. But man’s fear and shame continue to bar the way to such repentance.

God immediately brushes Adam’s evasive answer aside. Nakedness is not the issue here! If the circumstances had not been so tragic, the Lord initial question, ***“Who told you that you were naked?”***, would be almost comical. The obvious falsehood of Adam’s explanation is now revealed. Their nakedness had never troubled them before. Why was it an issue now? What had changed? In a world where there were only two people, where had this new found sense of modesty come from? Having dispensed with the pretense, God does not wait for an answer but proceeds immediately to the heart of the matter with His next question. ***“Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”*** The only issue here is obedience or disobedience to the divine command. God gives man one more opportunity to





*“Have You Eaten from the Tree” by Charles Natoire*

confess his crime. The culprit now stands before the judge. Surely Adam will now recognize that he has neither eluded nor deluded God!

### *Verse 12*

*The man said, “The woman You put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.”*

*“The woman You put here with me...”* - The lame reply which Adam offers reveals that he still fails to recognize what he has done and has not yet experienced genuine repentance. He tacitly admits that he has eaten the forbidden fruit but denies his own guilt for his actions based upon the circumstances. In a scenario all too familiar in our sin-sick culture the criminal poses as the victim. *“Yes, I ate it, but it wasn’t my fault!”* It is a humiliating performance which should cause us to blush with shame for the

father of our race and to squirm with chagrin as we see ourselves in Adam. The man is both devious and defensive. First he accuses God. *“This woman wasn’t my idea. I went to sleep and when I woke up she was there. And now she has led me into sin. You made her. This is your fault God, not mine.”* In his desperate fear, Adam cannot bring himself to own up to what he has done. Luther sees in these tragic events a superb revelation of the true nature of sin and the condemning nature of the Law.

*“See how superbly the vicious nature of sin is pictured here. Adam can in no way be forced into a confession of his sin, but he denies his sin and refuses it as long as he sees that he has any hope or any kind of excuse left. It is not amazing that in the beginning he hoped to be able to cover his sin and that he accuses God rather than acknowledge that he has sinned. But this is amazing that he still persists in his excuse after his conscience has convicted him and he himself has also heard his sin from God. He does not say, ‘Lord, I have sinned. Forgive my debt. Be merciful.’ but he passes on the guilt to the woman. It is the nature of sin not to permit the soul to flee back to God but rather to force it into a flight away from God...Therefore the statement ‘**The woman whom You gave to me**’ is full of resentment and anger against God, as if Adam were saying, ‘You have burdened me with this trouble. If You had given the woman some garden of her own and had not burdened me with making me live with her, I would have remained without sin. Therefore the guilt of my having sinned is Yours since You gave me a wife.’ Here Adam is presented as a typical instance of all sinners and of such as despair because of their sin. They cannot do otherwise than accuse God and excuse themselves inasmuch as they see that God is omnipotent and could have prevented those sins. Such an awful evil is sin when hearts are not given an encouragement in time through the promise of the forgiveness of sins. And such is the working of the Law, that when the Law stands alone without the Gospel and the knowledge of grace it leads to despair and ultimate impenitence.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, pp. 177-178)

God’s silence indicates His rejection of Adam’s *“Not Guilty!”* plea. The Lord does not deign to dignify the man’s craven whining with a response but immediately turns to the woman upon whom Adam attempted to shift the blame.



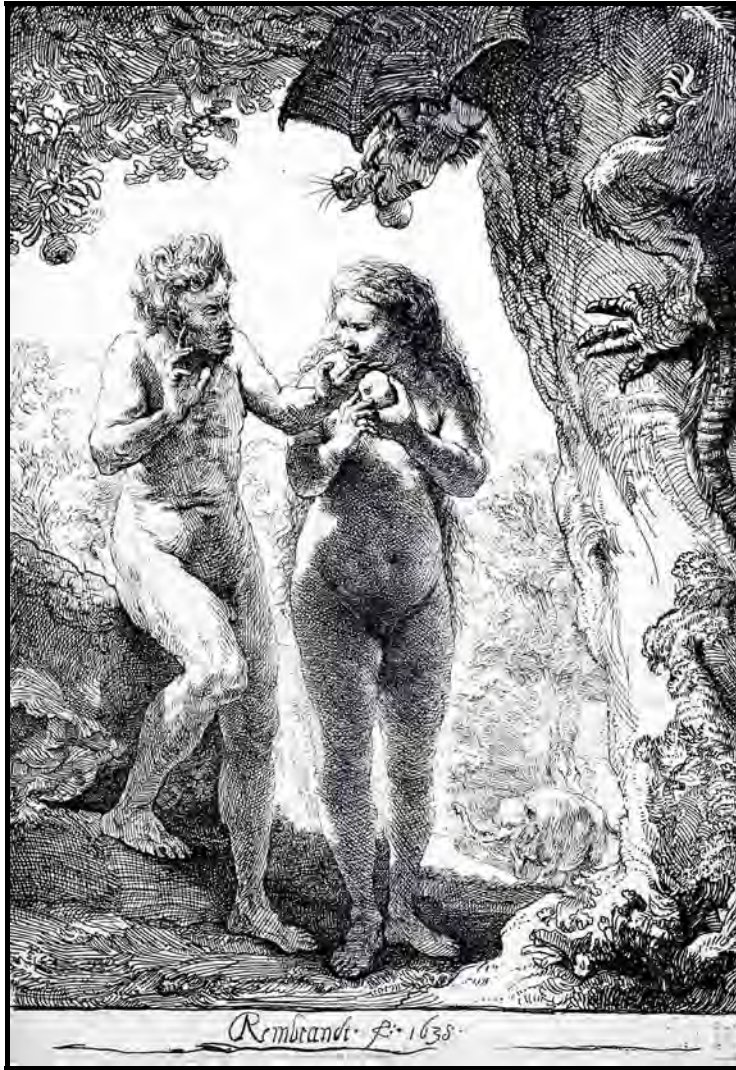
*“The Fall Into Sin” by Lucas Cranach*

### *Verse 13*

*Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me and I ate.”*

*“Then the Lord God said to the woman...”* - As in the previous instances (Genesis 3:9,11), God’s purpose is pedagogical, intended to lead the woman to repentance and provide her with an opportunity for forthright confession. God’s prominent use of the pronoun *“this”* may be a deliberate allusion to Adam’s joyful exclamation upon first meeting his wife to be where the same word dominated - *“This one, this time, is bone of my bones...”* (Genesis 2:23). How sadly things have changed! The woman whom he had hailed his perfect helpmate has now become his partner in crime, the scapegoat for his own guilt and shame.

Once again, the devastating impact of sin on human integrity is demonstrated. Eve will neither repent nor confess. Like her husband, she seeks to evade responsibility for her actions. *“The deceptive serpent is the real culprit,”* the woman contends. *“I was only the innocent victim!”* Sinful mankind’s inability to accept responsibility has already become a sadly consistent pattern. There is some truth in Eve’s disclaimer.



*“The Fall” by Rembrandt*

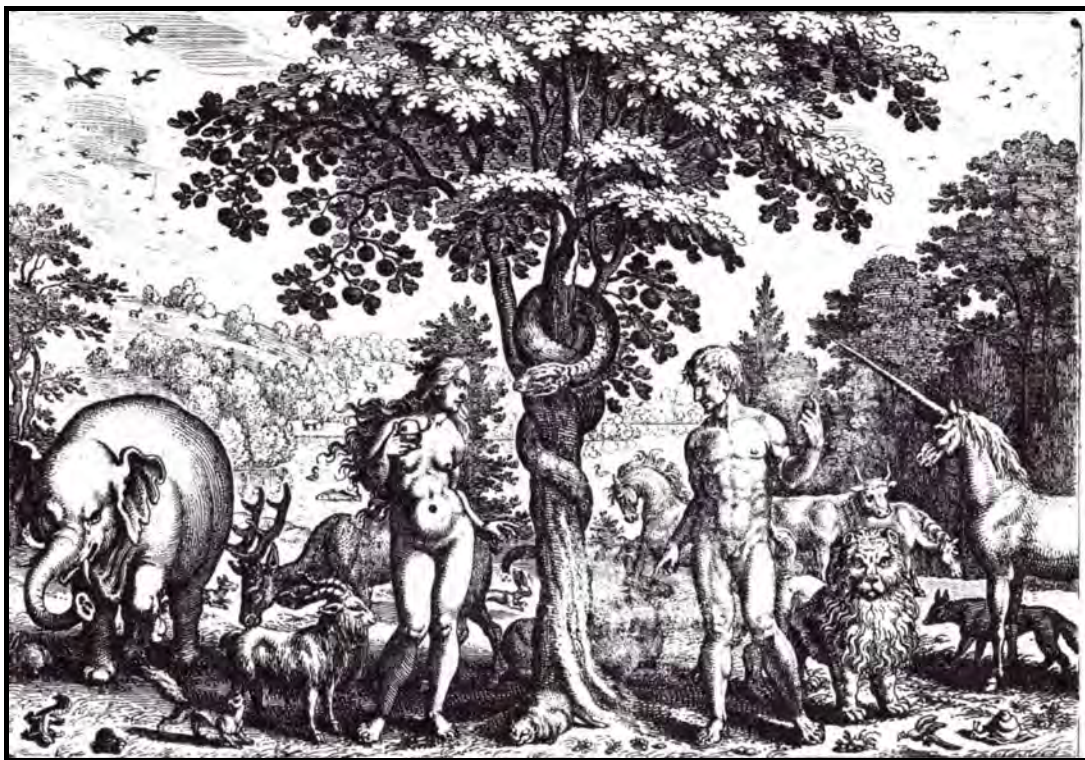
Unlike her husband, she was deceived (cf. 1 Timothy 2:14). It might also be said on her behalf that woman does not have the effrontery to blame God for her problem. Luther notes:

*“Thus we see Adam and Eve so fallen and sunk in sin that they cannot sink deeper. After unbelief follows disobedience of all man’s powers and parts. After this disobedience follows later on the excuse and defense of sin; and after the defense, the accusation and condemnation of God. This is the last step of sin, to insult God and to charge Him with being the originator of sin. Unless hearts are given courage through trust in mercy, our nature cannot be urged on beyond this point for there are successive steps to sin.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 179)

### *Verses 14-15*

*So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head and you will strike His heel.”*

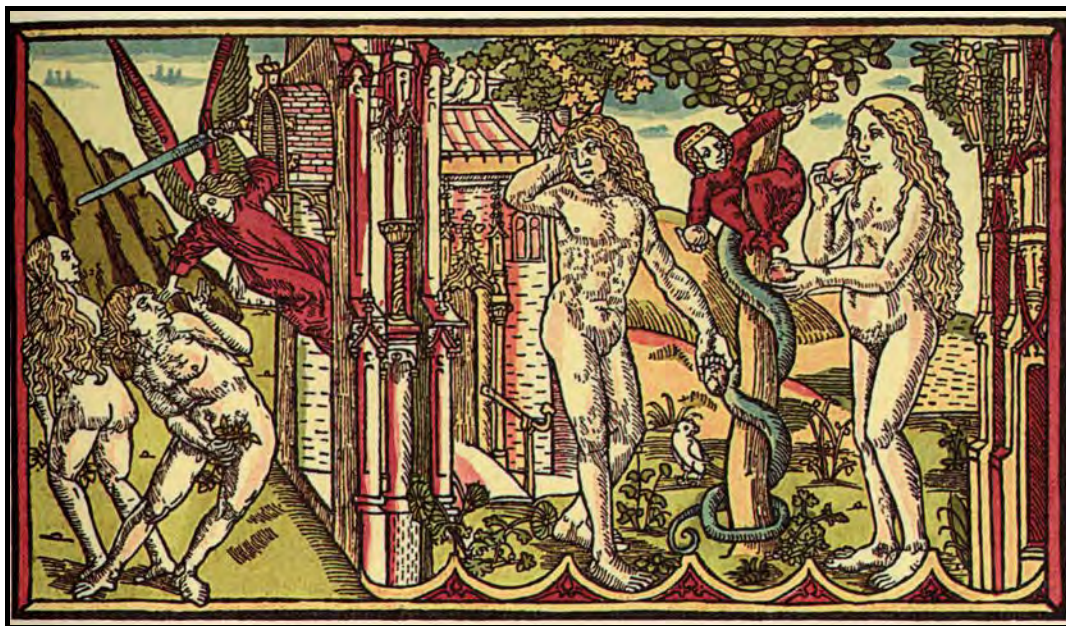
*“So the Lord God said to the serpent...”* - God now turns His attention to the hapless creature used by Satan as his means of entry into the garden. No pedagogical questions are posed to the serpent. The goal is no longer repentance and confession. Judgment is pronounced in sure and certain terms. St. John Chrysostom, the great preacher and theologian of the Eastern Church, explains the significance of the divine action in this way: *“God pronounces His curse upon the instrument that brought His creature to fall just as a loving father, when punishing the murderer of his son, might snap in two the sword or dagger with which the murder was committed.”* (Keyl & Delitsch, 1, p. 76) The punishment of the serpent is not simply the exercise of arbitrary divine vengeance upon a helpless creature which bears no moral responsibility in these events. The universe and all life within it were fashioned by



*“The Fall” by Matthias Merian*

God as the perfect environment for man. Mankind's fall brought down the curse of sin upon all of that creation. The universe, and all creatures within it, continue to exist as an environment for man. But that environment is perfect no longer, for man is no longer perfect. St. Paul discusses this link in Romans 8:

*“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of child birth right up to the present time.”* (Romans 8: 19-22)



*“Temptation and Fall” from the Lübeck Bible - 1494*

Thus, the entire physical universe will remain intimately connected to the spiritual condition and fate of man throughout time and perhaps into eternity. The curse of the serpent here illustrates that connection. The serpent's curse serves as a means of reminding man of that creature's role in his fall and of the final humiliation and destruction of Satan himself.

*“Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!”* - To “curse” means to invoke God's judgment upon someone, usually for some particular offense.

Cursing, in Scripture, was a most serious matter because it involved the most holy Name of God and called upon His almighty power. Forms of the word (Hebrew - “*arar*”) occur fifty-five times in the Old Testament. In this rare instance, the curse is all the more awesome because it is pronounced by God Himself. The serpent is cursed as the earth itself will later be cursed (Genesis 3:17). God speaks these most solemn words for the first time in direct reference to a human being in Genesis 4:11 in the aftermath of Cain’s murder of his brother Abel. The fact that it is God Himself who pronounces the curse guarantees its effectiveness for the Word of God invariably accomplishes that which it declares. All of creation was cursed by the entry of sin into the world but the serpent is singled out for punishment above all the rest because of its unique role in mankind’s downfall.

**“You will crawl on your belly”** - Some would insist that this means that snakes walked upright prior to the curse, and only now assume a slithering motion upon the ground. While this view is possible, it is not required by the text. The rabbis told fanciful tales about the serpent’s upright human-like posture before the Fall. They tell of a “*Sanhedrin of seventy-one angels*” who descended from heaven to execute God’s decree against him. “*They chopped off his hands and his feet. His suffering was so great that his agonized cries could be heard from one end of the world to the other.*” (Ginzberg, 1, p. 78) They go on to add that the serpent’s tongue was split because of the lies he told Eve, so that the snake’s forked tongue would forever serve as a reminder of his duplicity. (Ginzberg, 5, p. 101). All of these imaginative embellishments notwithstanding, the punishments subsequently meted out to Adam and Eve suggest a pattern of transformation in the significance of preexisting conditions. “***Creatures that move along the ground***” (Genesis 1: 24,25) were a part of God’s original perfect creation. It may be that snakes were originally in that category but that their method of locomotion now takes on a new significance. If this is the case, then the serpent’s punishment is similar to those received by woman and man, both of which involved a transformation in the significance of a defining component of their lives. For woman, that was child-bearing. Humanity’s capacity for procreation preceded the Fall (cf. Genesis 1:28), but now with the coming of sin, the woman’s crucial role as the life-bearer mutates into a source of peril and pain - “***I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children.***” (Genesis 3:18). For man, the transformation came in terms of his labor. That which was to have been satisfying and productive changes into “***painful toil***” and constant struggle to survive “***by the sweat of your brow.***” (Genesis 3:17-19). So also the serpent’s sinuous movement, once perceived as the source of its entrancing

beauty, now takes on the sinister overtone of silent menace as it glides along in search of its prey. John Phillips summarizes:

*“The silent, writhing motion of the serpent to this day forms a hieroglyphic of undulations and coils, written in the dust of the earth, written in lines full of repulsion and menace, written to remind us of the curse. Men look at the serpent with loathing, horror, and fear.”*  
(Phillips, p. 61)



*“The History Of Eden”  
15<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illumination*





*“Adam and Eve in Paradise”  
15<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illumination*

***“You will eat dust all the days of your life” -***

The punishment fits the crime. God’s judgments are never arbitrary but always appropriate to the offense, in keeping with His perfect justice.

*“Measure for measure: having sinned in the matter of eating, he is punished in the same respect.”* (Cassutto, p. 159) The phrase is obviously not literal.

*“Eating the dust”* is the typical figure of speech for personal humiliation and defeat elsewhere in Scripture. Thus Psalm 72 reports the victory of God’s royal Son with these words: ***“The desert tribes will bow before Him and His enemies will lick the dust.”***

(Psalm 72:9) Micah, the prophet, foretells the messianic victory of Israel in terms that allude to this passage: ***“Nations will see and be ashamed...they will lick dust like a snake, like creatures that crawl on the ground.”*** (Micah 7:16,17; cf. Isaiah 49:23; 65:25). The reference to ***“dust”*** in this context anticipates the death sentence about to be pronounced upon Adam and his posterity - ***“for dust you are and to dust you will return.”*** (Genesis 3:19). *“The reptile is responsible for the demise of the man, who returns to the dust and as the serpent’s diet it will be a perpetual reminder of its crime.”* (Matthews, p. 245) The fourth century Christian poet Ephrem the Syrian declares: *“And dust you shall eat of the days of your life because you deprived Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life.”* (Louth, p. 89) In a similar fashion, in the classic idiom of American Westerns those who die are said to *“bite the dust.”* This focus on mortality is reinforced by the phrase ***“all the days of your life.”*** The serpent

through whom the false promise ***“You will not surely die”*** (Genesis 3:4) was issued will die himself, subjected to the bondage of decay along with the rest of creation.

### ***Verse 15***

***And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.***

***“And I will put enmity between you and the woman...”*** - The direction of the conversation now shifts from the serpent itself to the malignant spirit which directed its actions - ***“the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.”*** (Revelation 12:9) Satan had deceitfully posed as Eve’s friend. She trusted him and accepted his evil counsel. He led her to her doom. That costly friendship is to be replaced by an ongoing hostility. ***“Enmity”*** is the deliberate animosity which seeks the harm or destruction of another. In Numbers 35, the concept is used to distinguish between premeditated murder and accidental manslaughter -

***“If in hostility he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that person shall be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him. But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him unintentionally, or without seeing him drops a stone on him that could kill him, and he dies, then since he was not his enemy and he did not intend to harm him, the assembly must judge between him and the avenger of blood according to these regulations.”*** (Numbers 35:21-24)

In Ezekiel 25, God explains His harsh judgment upon the Philistines in terms of their historic malice against the nation of Israel: ***“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge, with malice in their hearts and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah, this is what the Sovereign Lord says...’*** (Ezekiel 25:15-16; cf. 35:5). ***“Enmity”*** is thus a harsh word which denotes bitter opposition and malicious intent. The intensity further asserts that this ***“enmity”*** will not simply be the result of what has transpired here, but that God Himself will ***“put”*** this ***“enmity”*** into effect by divine decree. Those who had joined together as allies against their Creator will now, by God’s own design, be bitter enemies for all time.

Bible critics dismiss these words as a reference to mankind's almost instinctive abhorrence of reptiles in general and snakes in particular. But, as usual, those who presume to set themselves above God's holy Word have missed the point. The object of this enmity is not the serpent but the ancient Enemy concealed beneath the serpent's form. Dr. Martin Naumann said it well:

*“At least we need not pity this creature any more than all the creation which has now been made subject to vanity because of man's sin. The snake, or whatever type of animal it might have been (sometimes this one is called a dragon or something like it), this serpent or any like it feels no pain at having to crawl on its belly, nor does it feel degraded before all the other animals. Who then, or what is meant? Against whom is the curse directed? ... Believing Bible interpreters have always recognized Satan...Here God does not do him who hid in the serpent the honor to address him directly, but speaks to him through the serpent. Satan is the spirit who comes to mind when we see a serpent slithering through the grass. Satan is that despicable poisonous thing that feeds on all kinds of dirt and filth. Wanting to be like God, this spirit must crawl on its belly and lick dust eternally.”* (Naumann, pp. 10-11)

**“And between your offspring and hers:”** - This state of hostility does not merely involve Eve and the devil. It reaches out into the future to include generations yet unborn. The crucial word in this phrase is the noun **“offspring.”** The Hebrew term is *“zera.”* The word is often used in a particular sense in reference to a single individual descendant (cf. Genesis 4:25; 15:3; 19:32,34; 21:13; 38:8-9; 1 Samuel 1:11; 2:20). *“Zera”* is also used collectively to refer to a large group of descendants (cf. Genesis 9:9; 12:7; 13:16; 15:5,13,18; 16:10; 17:7-10,12; 21:12; 22:17-18). In Hebrew, as in English, the noun is typically singular in either case. In this phrase, the noun appears to be collective in reference to the **“offspring”** of Satan but particular in reference to the **“offspring”** The **“offspring”** of the devil are all those who follow him in his bitter revolt against God, his spiritual children, fallen men and angels. This is a collective reference to the head and all the members of the kingdom of darkness. Jesus uses similar language in His denunciation of those Jews who maliciously opposed Him and His gospel: **“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.”** (John 8:44) In his classic study of Messianic prophecy, Dr. Charles A Briggs contends:

*“This prediction does not point to the snakes of the world, but to the*

*serpents of the higher world, the evil spirits, and to the serpents among mankind, the evil men and seducers called by Jesus the children of the devil, indeed to all the forces of evil which array themselves against the children of God.” (Briggs, p. 75)*

In the second instance, however, the **“offspring”** of the woman is a single male individual. This is indicated in the phrase which immediately follows, which uses singular masculine pronouns to refer to the offspring of the woman - **“He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.”** The Septuagint’s Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament offers the striking translation- *“spermatos autes”* -literally -

*“her sperm.”* The paradoxical rendering is reflected in the Latin Vulgate’s translation - *“semen illius”* -literally *“her semen.”* The fathers of the early church found allusion to the virgin birth of Christ in this most unusual terminology.



*“The First Gospel” by Rudolf Schäfer*

These words are God’s declaration of war upon Satan and his realm. God’s promises that Satan and all those who follow him will ultimately be defeated and destroyed one man, a single male descendant of the woman. Through the woman the devil brought death and damnation into this world. Through the woman God will act to undo what the devil has done and bring life and immortality to light once again. Luther takes particular delight in noting that by this general reference to a descendant of the woman, God mocks and taunts the Adversary, leaving him in uncertainty and

fear as the who would finally overthrow him, forcing him to live in continual dread of every woman's son born throughout all the ages of man.

***“He will crush your head and you will strike His heel.”*** - The mercy and grace of God are now revealed. Although these words are spoken to Satan through the serpent, they are spoken for Adam and Eve. Standing in the midst of the shambles of His perfect creation, the Lord God causes a bright ray of hope to shine upon fallen mankind lost in dark despair. This text has correctly been called the *“Protoevangelium,”* that is, the *“First Gospel,”* for the broad stream of Messianic prophecy which flows throughout the Old Testament begins at this point. Rudolf Schäfer, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Lutheran artist and Bible illustrator, graphically depicts the concept in a 1929 title page drawing for the Book of Genesis. God the Father stands before His fallen creatures, His head bowed in sorrow, with a look of infinite sadness on His face. Adam and Eve cower in fear beneath the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil while the deadly serpent rears up to strike. Where the Tree of Life once stood there now stands a great crucifix. From the dying Savior's body beams of hopeful light stream across the picture brightening the darkness of despair. Martin Luther asserts: *“This passage contains in itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in Scripture.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 183). Dr. Robert Preus called this remarkable text *“the John 3:16 of the Old Testament.”* Based upon this passage Preus contended: *“Adam was a Christian long before the birth of Christ for he had the same faith in Christ that we have.”* (Judisch, p.88). Dr. Raymond Surburg, modern Lutheranism's greatest authority on Messianic prophecy, argued that the doctrine of justification by grace originates in Genesis 3:15 -

*“The doctrine of the justification of sinners had its origin immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve...Genesis 3:15, the Protoevangelium, was the hope of cursed mankind which was to be redeemed from the curse of the law and restored to the favor of God...Genesis 3:15 was an announcement of God's mercy, and while it was made in general terms and later Messianic prophecies would give more and more specific information on many points, yet it contained enough to give a solid foundation for faith and hope towards God and it was the first beam of Gospel light which dawned upon a fallen world.”* (Surburg, p. 134)

The plan of salvation is outlined in bold strokes. At an as yet undesignated time in the future, God will act to undo the damage that has been done to destroy the kingdom of the devil through an as yet unidentified Descendant of the woman. But even as he is



*“Adam and Eve Expelled from Eden”  
by Michiel Coxcie*

being defeated, Satan will strike out in rage to inflict grievous harm upon the Savior. The Hebrew text uses the same verb - “*suph*” - to describe both the action of the woman’s Descendant and the serpent. The verb’s intended meaning in each instance is indicated by its direct object as illustrated by the variance in the English translation - **“He will crush your head and you will strike his heel.”** In both instances the wound is fatal. The image is most effective! The Descendant of the woman steps down to crush the serpent’s head, but in its death throes the serpent strikes to inject its deadly venom into the Savior’s heel. The devil’s kingdom of death is destroyed by the death of the Savior. As the writer to the Hebrews explains: **“He too shared their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”** (Hebrews 2:14-15)

The New Testament frequently alludes to this magnificent first promise of the Gospel. St. Paul promises the Romans: **“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** (Romans 6:20) In describing the providential timing of Christ’s birth, Paul tells the Galatians: **“But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might**

***receive the full rights of sons.*** (Galatians 4:4) One of the New Testament's most explicit references to this prophecy comes in 1 Timothy 2:15 - ***“And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through the birth of the Child - if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety.”*** (1 Timothy 2:14-15). The imagery of the woman, her Descendant, and their bitter warfare with the Satanic serpent is graphically presented in St. John's apocalyptic vision: ***“A great and wondrous sign appeared in the heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to His throne....And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.”*** (Revelation 12:1-6)

In the Lutheran Confessions, the *“Formula of Concord”* cites this passage as the first proclamation of Law and Gospel in proper distinction to one another:

*“From the beginning of the world these two proclamations have been ever and ever inculcated alongside of each other in the church of God with proper distinction. For the descendants of the venerable patriarchs, as well as the patriarchs themselves, not only called to mind constantly how in the beginning man had been created righteous and holy by God and through the fraud of the serpent had transgressed God's command, had become a sinner, and had corrupted and had precipitated himself with all of his posterity into death and eternal condemnation, but also encouraged and comforted themselves again by the preaching concerning the Seed of the woman, who would bruise the serpent's head.”* (FCSD, V, 23)

Irenaeus of Lyon (135-202 A.D.), one of the great defenders of Christianity in the generations after the apostles, sees this particular Messianic prophecy as being crucial in God's plan of salvation. He also links this promise to our Lord's common designation of Himself as the *“Son of Man”* in the four Gospels.

*“Christ completely renewed all things, both taking up the battle against our enemy and crushing him who at the beginning had led us captive in Adam, trampling on his head, as you find in Genesis that God said to the serpent, ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and the seed of the woman.’ He will be on watch for your head, and you will be on the watch for his heel. From then on it was proclaimed that he who was to be born of a virgin, after the likeness of Adam, would be on the watch for the serpent’s head. This is the seed of which the apostle says, ‘The law of works was established until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.’ (Galatians 3:19) He shows this still more clearly in the same epistle when he says: ‘But when the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman.’ (Galatians 4:4) The enemy would not have been justly conquered unless it had been a man made of woman who conquered him. For it was by a woman that he had power over man from the beginning, setting himself up in opposition to him. Because of this the Lord also declares himself to be the Son of Man, so renewing in himself that primal man from whom the formation of man by woman began, that as our race went down to death by a man who overcame, and as death won the palm of victory over us by a man, so we might by a man receive the palm of victory over death.” (Louth, pp. 90-91)*



*“Michael and the Dragon” by Rudolf Schäfer*



Many reject the possibility of messianic prophecy at this early date altogether. Even among those who acknowledge the messianic nature of Genesis 3:15 there is an unfortunate tendency to limit the scope of that which is here revealed. However, confessional Lutherans have consistently maintained the crucial significance of this first proclamation of the Gospel. Dr. Martin Nauman writes:

*“But it was not as has been said, sometimes with tenderness, the first little star in the pitch black darkness of the night of sin and death that had come upon man... Not just a glimmer, but rather the full burst of the sun of righteousness with healing in its wings...Adam and Eve had the Word, a light unto their feet, the Daystar from on high. No dim theology theirs, to grow only gradually into a knowledge of a divinity. No constantly changing or ever evolving religious concepts for them. They had revelation...They had the Word of God, the Word of Life, not the minimum of revelation, but more like the broad base of a pyramid of promises that culminated or came to a point in the final fanfare of fulfillment on the fields of Bethlehem, bathed in the glory of the Lord.”*  
(Naumann, pp. 9,13)

### **Verse 16**

***To the woman He said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to your children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”***

***“To the woman He said...”*** - Having cursed the serpent and promised the doom of Satan and his dominion, the Lord now turns to address the woman. Sin always has its consequences, all of the devil’s insinuations to the contrary notwithstanding. The Lord God proceeds to outline the grim realities of human life in a sinful world, first for the woman, then for the man. The text is as much a word of warning as it is an announcement of punishment. God is sadly informing His fallen children about the dire consequences of their disobedience and rebellion.

The pattern already evident in the punishment of the serpent continues. Nahum Sarna explains: *“God now metes out punishment on each transgressor in turn, in the order of their original appearance on the scene. In each case, the judgment is of a twofold nature; it effects what is of central concern in the life of each entity, and it regulates a basic relationship.”* (Sarna, p. 27) God describes the impact of sin on the woman’s life primarily in terms of her role as mother and wife. Eve had been created to be the

helpmate, the life-bearer. As the perfect complement of her husband, those roles were intended to bring life primarily in terms of her role as mother and wife. Eve had been created to be the helpmate, the life-bearer. As the perfect complement of her husband those roles were intended to provide the woman with unequalled joy and satisfaction. But sin twists and perverts the divine intent.

***“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to your children.”*** - God’s greatest gift to woman was to bestow upon her the privilege of serving as the *“life-bearer.”* Within her body, the unborn child is conceived and grows. She experiences that growth and senses her child’s every movement and mood with unparalleled intimacy. The result of that original physical bond is the unique emotional bond that unites a mother and her child. There is nothing to equal it in all of human experience. God warns that the taint of sin will bring bitter pain even to the woman’s moment of supreme joy. The experience of childbirth becomes the woman’s time of greatest physical distress and vulnerability. The text is most emphatic to emphasize the intensity of the suffering inflicted upon the woman - ***“I will greatly increase...”*** Cassuto makes the interesting observation that the Hebrew text does not use the typical words for the pain of childbirth. In the first phrase, the Hebrew word translated by the NIV as ***“pains”*** is *“issabon”* which typically refers to difficult or burdensome toil. (The English term *“labor pains”* describes the birth process in exactly the same sense.) The same word will recur in Verse 17 to describe the deformation of Adam’s work in ***“painful toil.”*** Its repetition serves to link the punishment of woman with that of the man. In both cases, that which was intended to be their greatest satisfaction is deformed into their greatest peril. In the second phrase, God warns Eve, ***“in pain*** (Hebrew - *“eseb”*) ***you will give birth to your children.”*** Both of these unusual Hebrew *“pain words”* also sound like *“es”* the Hebrew word for *“tree.”* In this way, (carrying the acoustic similarity into English) God reminds Adam and Eve that their torment, trouble, and trauma are all the result of their sinful disobedience at the tree.

*“The very fact that Scripture does not employ here the usual phrases found in connection with the suffering of childbirth...but chose expressions derived from the root “asabh” proves that it was with some specific intention - for instance to allude to the word “es” - that these words were selected.”* (Cassuto, p. 165)

The agony of labor and delivery is often cited in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. Micah warns of Jerusalem’s coming distress: ***“The pain seizes you like***

*that of a woman in labor. Writhe in agony, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor for you must now leave the city to camp in the open field.*” (Micah 4: 9-10). Isaiah uses the same simile to foretell the anguish of Babylon’s downfall: **“Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them, they will writhe like a woman in labor...At this, my body was wracked with pain, pangs seize me like those of a woman in labor.”** (Isaiah 13:8; 21:3). Our Lord Himself contrasts the joy which follows birth with the anguish which precedes it: **“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.”** (John 16:21) When God created the man and the woman, childbirth was at the center of the blessing which He graciously bestowed upon them (Cf. Genesis 1:28). In the aftermath of the Fall, the birth of the Child (1 Timothy 2:15) is again the means through which the devil will be destroyed and the blessing restored. Thus birth pangs are not merely the reminder of the futility of the Fall. Through the promise of the Messiah they are also a sign of the joy that is to come (cf. Romans 8:22-24).

**“Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.”** - Once more, the punishment fits the crime! The woman’s desire to exercise leadership for humankind in place of her husband had led to their downfall. God warns that the role/relationship between men and women, which was designed to enable to complement one another and to be together more than they could ever possibly have been alone, will be twisted and marred by sin. The tension between the two verbs **“desire”** and **“rule”** form the parameters of the sentence. A nearby parallel passage with almost identical vocabulary and grammar clarifies the intent of the language here. In Genesis 4:7, God warns Cain against the sinful desire, in the form of anger and envy, which seeks to dominate and destroy his life: **“But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”** Sin’s **“desire”** is to rule in Cain’s life, to take over and become dominant in controlling him. God urges Cain to **“master”** that desire, that is, to struggle against it and conquer it. These are exactly the same two verbs used in God’s warning to Eve in Genesis 3:16. **“Your desire will be for your husband...”** - that is to say, in a sinful world woman will no longer be content to carry out the role for which she was created. The selfishness and pride which are sin’s essence will cause her to reject her role as man’s **“helpmate”** and strive, instead, to rule in his place. **“And he will rule over you.”** - The man, incapable of the selfless love his position as **“head”** requires, will abuse his role as a means of self-assertion. He will resort to coercion and compulsion to exert his authority while neglecting his responsibilities. The Hebrew text uses the verb

“*mashal*” which conveys the negative connotation of domination. This is not the benevolent headship of God’s original design but self-serving domineering inflicted upon another. In this instance, the verb could literally be translated “*He will lord it over you.*” The New Testament uses the Greek counterpart for this Hebrew word in Christ’s disparaging comment about the Gentile’s abuse of their authority: “***The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that.***” (Luke 22:25). Here begins the battle of the sexes which has raged continuously throughout the history of our race. In the aftermath of the Fall, man no longer rules easily; he abuses his headship for his own selfish ends. The woman’s desire is to control her husband, to usurp his divinely appointed leadership. The result is an ongoing cycle of rebellion and repression. A satirical engraving from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, entitled “*The Battle for the Pants*” effectively illustrates the problem. The woman rises up in rebellion against the leadership of man. Wielding the distaff from her spinning wheel (which represents her domestic role as homemaker) as a weapon, she attacks her husband. Leadership in the family, that is the right to wear the pants, is represented by the drawstring drawers in the foreground. The devil, depicted as a monstrous chimera, lurks in the background, inciting the combatants. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the woman and the loving headship of the man. And so, the rule of love, founded in Paradise, is replaced by struggle, tyranny, domination, and manipulation - all the results and consequences of sin.



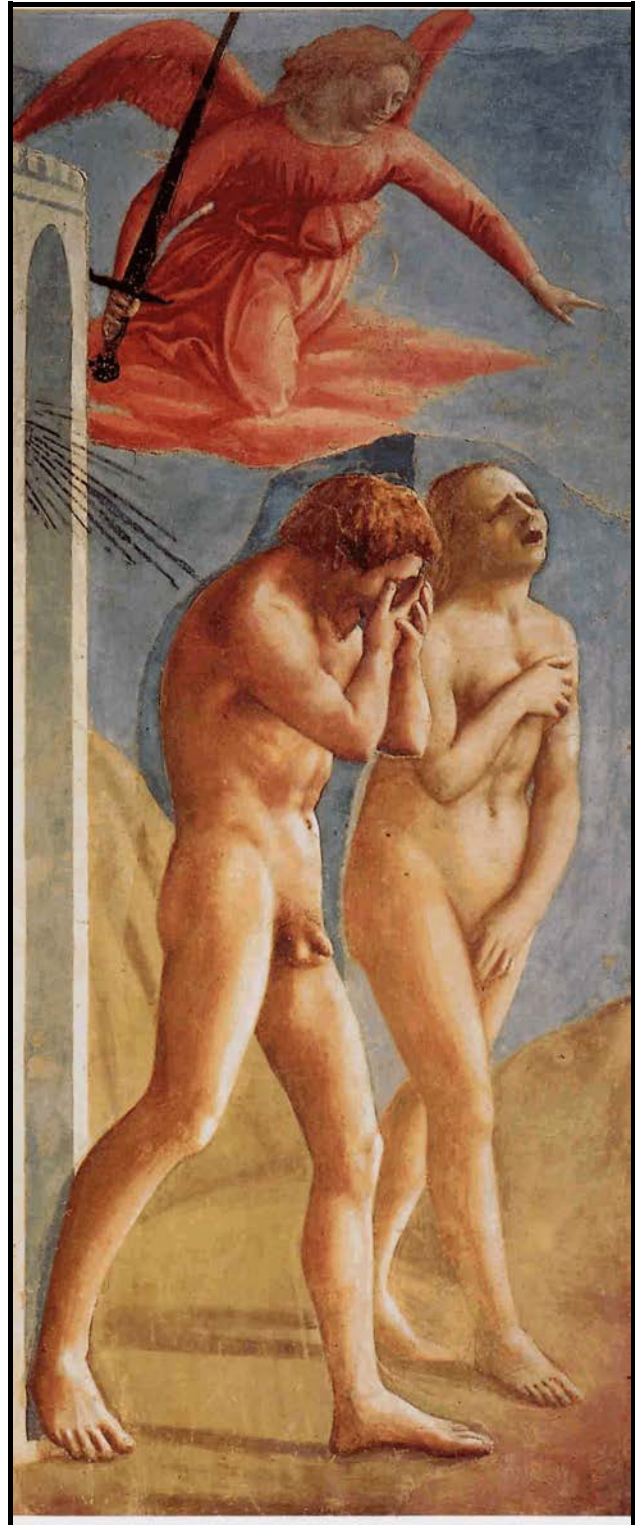
“*The Battle for the Pants*” by Israel Meckenem

**Verse 17**

**To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”**

**“To Adam He said...”** - Having addressed both the Satan/serpent and the woman, God finally turns to the man himself. The sentence pronounced on Adam is the longest and the fullest since he, as the divinely appointed head, bore the greatest responsibility. The NIV text shifts to the use of the man’s proper name, **“Adam,”** at this point. Some commentators suggest the continued use of the more generic **“the man”** might be more appropriate given the general nature of this pronouncement and its implications for all of Adam’s posterity.

**“Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree...”** - This clause specifies the reason for Adam’s punishment. It occurs first in the Hebrew text for particular emphasis. Adam sinned at two levels. At one level he defied God’s plain and simple prohibition of the forbidden fruit (cf. Genesis 2:17). That is obvious and will be specified in the following phrase. But God goes deeper. At another level, Adam’s actions violated the basic order of creation which God had established



**“The Expulsion from Paradise” by Masaccio**

between man and woman. The Lord's indictment of Adam begins by stressing the crucial significance of his abdication of responsibility. He followed when he should have led. He abandoned his headship and failed to protect the woman. According to God's assessment, this moral failure in Adam was the beginning of his sin and the origin of mankind's ruination.

***“About which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’*** - God's prohibition is repeated verbatim. This serves to emphasize its clarity and therefore the severity of man's crime. There was no hint of ambiguity or uncertainty here. Man knew exactly what God had commanded. Nonetheless, he chose to directly disobey that command. There are no extenuating circumstances.

***“Cursed is the ground because of you...”*** - Neither Adam nor Eve are cursed in Genesis 3. God's curse was pronounced upon the serpent (Genesis 3:14) and now upon the soil. Man's sin condemns all of creation to endure sin's dire consequences since all creation was fashioned as the perfect home for man. The entire physical universe is now subject to ***“the bondage of decay.”*** (cf. Romans 8:19-22). The fertile land which God had created to bring forth an abundance of vegetation (Genesis 1:11-13) and thereby to provide a readily available and ample food supply for humanity (Genesis 2:29-30) now falls under the curse of God. The earth itself will now become Adam's enemy rather than his servant. A land that is ***“blessed”*** by God is abundantly watered and fertile. In his valedictory to the tribes of Israel, Moses invokes the blessing of God upon the patrimony of Joseph with these beautiful words:

***“May the Lord bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield; with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its fulness and the favor of Him who dwelt in the burning bush.”*** (Deuteronomy 33:13-16)

But Deuteronomy also specifies the fearsome nature of God's curse upon the land as the result of disobedience and sin:

***“The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking Him...The Lord will strike you with scorching heat and drought, with blight and***

***mildew which will plague you until you perish. The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder and it will come down from the skies until you are ruined.*** (Deuteronomy 28:20,22-24)

Beneath the curse of God, the earth will yield its harvest to man only grudgingly and in meager measure. Survival in a world cursed by sin will be a constant struggle against a hostile environment.

***“Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life...”*** - Eating is the recurrent theme of this segment. The Lord refers to it five times in verses 17-19. Each reference must have sounded like a hammer blow on Adam and Eve’s stricken consciences, reminding them over and over again of their sin and its dreadful cost. Mankind’s offense consisted in eating the forbidden fruit. Measure for measure the punishment fits the crime. In verse 16, the woman had been warned that she would suffer the bitter pains of labor in her fundamental role as wife and mother. The text now uses the same grim word (Hebrew *“issabon”*) to warn the man that he will be similarly afflicted in his basic role as provider and protector. The word indicates not merely physical pain but mental anguish and grief as well. It is important to note that man worked before the Fall into sin (cf. Genesis 2:15). Work is not itself a consequence of sin. But the very work which had been a source of great satisfaction and fulfillment before now mutates into ***“painful toil.”*** This pattern parallels the punishment of the woman. The command to ***“be fruitful and increase in number”*** (Genesis 1:28) also preceded the Fall. But that which was intended as pure blessing undergoes a malignant transformation because of sin and becomes the source of peril and pain. The phrase ***“all the days of your life”*** implies the new reality of death. The same ominous words had been used earlier in pronouncing punishment upon the serpent (Genesis 3:14).

### ***Verses 18-19***

***It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.***

***“It will produce thorns and thistles for you...”*** - Man will draw his sustenance from the land only with the greatest difficulty. The text uses a form of the same Hebrew verb which had been used in Genesis 2:9 to describe the origin of the abundant



*“The Flight From Eden” by Edward Burne-Jones*

vegetation of the Garden. But in this instance it is not beautiful fruit-bearing trees which spring up at God’s command but weeds and briars which hinder man’s attempts to feed himself. The growth of **“thorns and thistles”** characteristically signals a place that is desolate and abandoned. Thus, for example, the prophet Hosea uses the prickly image of thorns and thistles growing up in a desolate place as a sign of God’s judgment upon man’s sinful rebellion: **“The high places of wickedness will be destroyed - it is the sin of Israel. Thrones and thistles will grow up and cover their altars.”** (Hosea 10:8) It is likely that this phrase does not describe the creation of new plant species but rather deteriorative mutations of existing plants which rendered the physical environment much less hospitable to human habitation. Tertullian of Carthage, a prominent 2<sup>nd</sup> Century defender and teacher of the faith, suggested an allusion here to the crown of thorns which was imposed upon the brow of our Lord:

*“To what kind of crown, I ask you, did Christ Jesus submit for the salvation of both sexes? He who is the Head of man and the Glory of woman and the Husband of the church - what kind of crown? It was made from thorns and thistles. They stood as a symbol of the sins that the soil of the flesh brought forth for us but the power of the cross removed, blunting every sting of death since the head of the Lord bore its pain. And beside the symbol, we are reminded also of the scornful abuse, the degradation and the vileness of his cruel tormentors.”* (Louth, p. 95)



***“And you will eat the plants of the field...”*** - This instruction is not new. It simply repeats and reaffirms the pre-Fall arrangement (cf. Genesis 1:30; 2:16). Before man brought down sin’s curse upon the land, the systematic cultivation of plants was unnecessary (cf. Genesis 2:5). The bountiful abundance of Eden was more than adequate to meet all human needs. But now that sin has entered the world, man, along with all the rest of creation, must struggle to survive.

***“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food...”*** - This warning breathes a sense of futility and frustration. Job laments: ***“Does not man have hard service on the earth? Are not his days like those of a hired man? Like a slave longing for the evening shadows, or a hired man waiting eagerly for his wages?”*** (Job 7:1-2) Sin robs man’s satisfying labor of its joy. Work becomes drudgery. All of man’s efforts will now be accompanied by pain and weariness. Through it all there lurks a pervasive sense of futility. At the end of his life, world-weary Solomon concludes:

***“So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun...What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving which he does under the sun? All his day’s work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.”***  
(Ecclesiastes 3:17-23)

***“Until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”*** - The ultimate inevitable consequence of sin is death. God had warned man - ***“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*** (Genesis 2:17). That grim warning has been fulfilled. Death has become an inescapable part of the human reality. At the moment of Adam’s disobedience, a creature fashioned for immortality became mortal. St. Paul offers this cogent summary: ***“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men because all sinned.”*** (Romans 5:12) Now death reigns triumphant over humanity ***“for the wages of sin is death.”*** (Romans 6:23). In a direct allusion to man’s creation from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), physical death is concretely described as a return



*“The Expulsion from Eden” by E.M. Lillien*

to the dust from which man had been formed in the beginning. God had given life to the dust from which Adam was formed. Because of sin, that pattern is reversed and in death the physical body returns to the dust from which it was taken. In the moment of his deepest distress, the patriarch Job pleaded with God to recall His gracious act of creation in the imagery of dust and death:

***“Your hands shaped me and made me. Will You now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk, and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness.”*** (Job 10:8-12)

Later Job’s erstwhile friend Elihu acknowledges mankind’s ongoing dependence upon God as the only source and giver of life, using the same Genesis language: ***“If it were His intention and He withdrew His spirit and breath all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust.”*** (Job 34:15) David makes effective use of the same imagery to express the frailty and vulnerability of mortal man: ***“As a father has compassion upon his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.”*** (Psalm 103:13-14). Scriptures classic definition of physical death is nearly a

paraphrase of God's warning to Adam: *"The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."* (Ecclesiastes 12:7).



*"Remember, Man, That You Are Dust, and to Dust You Shall Return."*

Dust was our origin and now, because of sin, dust is the destiny of every naturally born descendant of Father Adam. The ancient liturgies of the church seek to convey and apply this truth to the lives of the people of God across the centuries in their timeless message of Law and Gospel. These grim words appear at two crucial moments. The first is at the grave side in the Committal Service of the liturgy of Christian Burial. Just before the casket is lowered into the grave, the presiding minister declares *"earth to earth - ashes to ashes - dust to dust."* This solemn pronouncement is often accompanied by the ritual application of sand or earth to the lid of the casket to convey the truth that physical death is the result of God's punishment upon sin. The second liturgical usage of Genesis 3:19 comes in the ritual imposition of ashes upon the foreheads of the faithful on Ash Wednesday, the beginning Lent's forty days of penitence and prayer. As the congregation comes forward to the altar, the presiding minister traces the outline of a cross in the ashes with the words: *"Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return."* (In the traditional Latin - *"Memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris."*)

## ***Verse 20***

***Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living.***

***“Adam named his wife Eve...”*** - Although twisted and distorted by sin (cf. Genesis 3:16) the role/relationship which God established between men and women in the beginning remains in effect after the Fall. At the time of woman’s creation, man had selected the title which would designate the gender (Genesis 2:23). Now man carries out his responsibility and exercises his authority in designating the woman’s personal name.



***“The Temptation of Adam and Eve” by Raphael***

***“Eve, because she would be the mother of all living.”*** - Old Testament names should always be carefully scrutinized. Their meaning often conveys a profound message. That is clearly the case in this instance. The name which Adam selects seems to indicate that God’s patient process of instruction has succeeded in leading Adam to repentance and restoration of faith in the Lord and His Word. The evasion of responsibility and recrimination which had characterized his earlier comments about the woman (cf. Genesis 3:12) are gone. Instead Adam honors his wife and acknowledges the crucial role she has been called upon to play, not only in the propagation of

the human race, but also as the mean through which the curse of sin would finally be undone. The Hebrew text uses a verb in the perfect tense which ordinarily notes action that is already finished or complete. However, in this instance, the action has not yet occurred and will only be completed in the future. This usage will prove to be common in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. It is called the “*prophetic perfect*” and serves to express the certainty of God’s promises. If the Word of God promises something, even though the fulfillment of that promise may lie in the far distant future, it is as certain as though it had already taken place.

The Hebrew name “*Eve*” (“*Hawwa*”) sounds like the word “*living*” (Hebrew - “*hayya*”). This phonetic link explains Adam’s choice - “*She is the mother of all living, for all human life will have its source in her body. This assumes a prodigious posterity and is a tribute to Adam’s faith in the prospect that God had revealed.*” (Matthews, p. 254) Luther agrees with this assessment and cites the name selection as a deliberate confession of Adam’s faith in the first Gospel promise of deliverance through the Descendant of the woman.

*“The name which Adam gives his wife is a very pleasing and delightful name. For what is more precious, better, or more delightful than life? It is clear from this passage that after Adam had received the Holy Spirit, he had become marvelously enlightened, and that he believed and also understood the saying concerning the woman’s Seed who would crush the head of the serpent. Moreover, he wanted to give an outward indication of this faith of his and lend distinction to it by means of his wife’s name. By this designation of his wife, he gave support to the hope of the future Seed, strengthened his own faith, and comforted himself with the thought that he believed in life even when all nature had already been subjected to death... By assigning this name to his wife, he give clear indication that the Holy Spirit had cheered his heart through his trust in the forgiveness of sins by the Seed of Eve. He calls her Eve to remind himself of the promise through which he himself also received new life, and to pass on the hope of eternal life to his descendants. This hope and faith he writes on his wife’s forehead by means of this name.”*  
(Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 221)

## ***Verse 21***

***The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.***

***“The Lord God made...”*** - The physical environment has changed. The hospitable harmonious world that God created has been destroyed by sin. God’s action in providing clothing for Adam and Eve before their expulsion from the Garden of Eden recognizes those changes. In His mercy and grace God is unwilling to send His creatures out into the world naked, vulnerable, and unprotected. Their own pathetic fig leaves are completely inadequate (Genesis 3:7). God provides the help for man which man was unable to provide for himself.

Their skimpy loincloths are replaced with ***“garments”*** (Hebrew - *“kuttonet”*). This word designates short- or long- sleeved shirt/tunic, generally made of linen or wool that reached down to the knees or even to the ankles. In this instance, the text specifies that the tunics were fashioned from animal skins. The death of these animals, and the shedding of their blood to provide covering for man prefigures the Old Testament sacrificial system and the ultimate sacrifice of the Messiah who would shed His innocent blood as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. This allusion is reinforced by the fact that a few verses later, in chapter 4, Cain and Abel are depicted as offering sacrifices without any further introduction or explanation. Luther perceives the death of these animals as a reminder of human mortality: *“This is also why He clothed them, not in foliage or in cotton, but in the skin of slain animals, for a sign that they are mortal and that they are living in certain death.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 221)



***“Expelled from Eden” by J. James Tissot***

Some would utilize God's action in providing clothing for Adam and Eve as a divine endorsement of clothing or of a particular standard of personal modesty. Henry Morris asserts that this incident teaches that "*a sense of shame relative to nakedness is entirely appropriate.*" He goes on to conclude: "*Modern nudists and hedonists, despite protestations about the beauty of the human body and the 'freedom' and 'naturalness' of displaying it openly, should recall that God Himself took pains to provide clothing to cover the nakedness of the first man and woman.*" (Morris, p. 130) In a recent book bearing the ominous title *Christian Modesty and the Undressing of America*, Jeff Pollard carries this misguided conclusion one step further. Based on his study of the Hebrew word "*kuttonet*," he argues that this text not only endorses clothing in general but further provides God's design for clothing, indicating specifically how much of the human body such clothing should cover.

*"It covered the body from at least the neck to the knees, while sometimes reaching mid-calf or all the way to the feet...This was God's design for covering Adam and Eve's nakedness and shame. God did not give a fur bikini to represent our righteousness and salvation."* (Pollard, pp. 25-26)

Such conclusions tell us a great deal more about the cultural background of their authors than about the meaning of the Biblical text. This passage is not a fashion statement, but a grim reminder of the vulnerability of man in a world now cursed by sin and subject to the bondage of decay.

### **Verses 22-24**

***And the Lord God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.***

***"And the Lord God said..."*** - Once again, an action of particular significance is preceded by "*divine deliberation*" which enables us to understand God's motive and reasoning (cf. Genesis 1:26; 2:18). Luther aptly describes these words as "*holy irony.*" God sadly parodies the devil's empty promises, using the very language of the deceptive half-truths which had led to man's downfall. ***"You will be like God,***

*knowing good and evil*” the devil had said (Genesis 3:5), promising enlightenment and liberation. There was an element of truth in Satan’s words, twisted and distorted



*“The Guardian of Paradise” by Franz von Stuck*

to serve his evil purpose. In choosing to disobey God’s command, man had become his own god, acknowledging no authority higher than his own will and desire. The evil which until that fateful moment had been only theoretical was suddenly very real indeed. In that sense, his disobedience did enable him to “*know*” (Hebrew “*yada*”) evil in a way that he could never otherwise have known it. The Lord’s “*holy irony*” uses the devil’s own deceitful half-truths to describe man’s predicament - ***“The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.”***

***“He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever.”*** - By his willful act of disobedience man had forfeited the immortality for which he had been created. God acts to forestall any desperate attempt by humanity to regain that which they had lost on their own initiative. Nahum Sarna

correctly observes that man’s original disobedience had “*exceeded the limits of creaturehood*” and thereby established the precedent for future acts of disobedience.

*“Man, having already exceeded the limits of creaturehood has radically altered the perspective of human existence... He may therefore be tempted to change his condition by artificial means, rather than by*



*restoring the ruptured harmony between the divine will and the human will, the harmony that is ultimately the definition of paradise.” (Sarna, p. 30)*

Furthermore, the curse of death and decay has fundamentally altered the nature of human existence. Perpetual life in a dying world would have been a bane, not a blessing. The language alludes to man’s earlier act of disobedience - **“to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat.”** That which man had done to pluck the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will not be allowed to recur in reference to the tree of life. St Ephrem the Syrian (306-373) notes:

*“If Adam had rashly eaten from the tree of knowledge he was commanded not to eat, how much faster would he hasten to the tree of life about which he had not been so commanded? But it was now decreed that they should live in toil, in sweat, in pains and in pangs. Therefore, lest Adam and Eve, after having eaten of this tree, live forever and remain in eternal lives of suffering, God forbade them to eat, after they were clothed with a curse, that which He had been prepared to give them before they incurred the curse, and when they were still clothed in glory.” (Louth, p. 101)*

**“So the Lord banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out..”** - The text emphasizes immediate, decisive action. The combination of two verbs - **“banished him”** (Hebrew - *“salah”*) and **“drove the man out”** (Hebrew - *“garas”*) - reinforce the idea that man does not leave the Garden willingly. Nor is he gently escorted to the Garden’s edge. In fact, he is thrown out! There was something particularly shameful about being driven forth from the Garden. Divine goodness aimed to make man feel his altered state very keenly: first blessed fellowship, then harsh expulsion. These are especially strong words. *“Banish”* is later used to describe Abraham’s expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael from his camp so that they will not pose a threat to Isaac (cf. Genesis 21:14; 25:6). The same verb is used in reference to the removal of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:10) *“Drive out”* is stronger still. It describes God’s exile of Cain (Genesis 4:14) and occurs in law codes of Israel in reference to divorce and dispossession (Leviticus 21:7,14; Deuteronomy 33:27). The same Hebrew verb is often used of the driving out of the heathen nations before Israel as she moves toward the land of promise (cf. Exodus 23:28-30; 33:2; Numbers 22:11; Deuteronomy 33:27;

Judges 2:3; 6:9). Adam and Eve are driven out of their beautiful home to go forth into a bleak exile. The separation from God which is the inevitable consequence of sin now becomes a physical reality. Humanity is expelled from Eden, the perfect home which God had designed for them and the place where God had communed with them. The repetition of the verbs highlights the intensity of the situation. This is a grim moment indeed for mankind!



*“Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise”  
by Albrecht Dürer*

Man’s fate in the cruel new world that he has fashioned for himself is emphasized once more. His life will be characterized by relentless toil followed by death. Wise Solomon said it well: *“So I hated life because work that is done under the sun is grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind...What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days, his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This, too, is meaningless.”* (Ecclesiastes 2:17, 22-23) The futility of man’s labor in a sinful world is emphasized by the transitory nature of human life and the inevitability of death: *“Man’s fate is like that of the animals, the same fate awaits them both. As one dies, so dies the other...All go*

*to the same place; all come from the dust, and to dust all return.”* (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20). The deliberate reference to man’s creations from the dust of the earth recalls the words of God’s curse upon fallen Adam - *“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”* (Genesis 3:19) Man had proudly aspired to equal God, but he remains, nonetheless, only a creature formed from the *dust of the ground*.

*“He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”* - The text highlights the placement of the guardians on the east side of the Garden of Eden. Genesis 4:16 notes that Cain - *“went out of the Lord’s presence to live in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”* Thus, it would seem that man was banished toward the east and hence it was precisely on the east side of the Garden that the guardians who were to prevent him from returning were stationed. It may also be that the Garden was not accessible in other directions and that Eden’s gateway or entrance was on its eastern side. In the tabernacle and later the temple the entrances were also placed in the east, facing the direction of the rising sun.



*“God’s Curse Upon Mankind” by Louis Beroud*

The tabernacle/temple motif is further maintained by the use of the verb *“placed”* (Hebrew - *“sakan”*) in reference to the positioning of the cherubim guardians. This is the verb characteristically used to depict the dwelling of God among His people and the physical erection of the sanctuary in the midst of the Israelite encampment (cf. Exodus 25:8; 29:45; Deuteronomy 12:11; Joshua 18:1; Jeremiah 7:3). This language serves to emphasize that banishment from Eden meant separation from God Himself. *“Such imagery effectively depicts the excommunication of the man and the woman*

from the presence of God...Our parents squandered what men and women have longed to regain ever since.” (Matthews, p. 258) The basic message was reinforced over and over again in the design of the tabernacle and the temple. Sinful man cannot stand in



*“The Guardian at Eden’s Door” by Abbey Alston*

the presence of the holy God. Man’s redemption price must be paid in innocent blood. Centuries of ritual sacrifice among the Israelites pointed forward to the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross. By His death for us we are set free from the curse of sin and death. The final chapter of the New Testament visualizes this truth in the image of the Tree of Life at

the center of the New Jerusalem freely accessible to all those *“whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”* (Revelation 22:1-5)

*“After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”* - The guardians of the tree of life are designated as *“cherubim.”* The plural Hebrew noun (singular - *“cherub”*). The cherub is the first angel mentioned in the Bible. The name is derived from the Akkadian noun *“kuribu”* which means *“one who prays or intercedes.”* In the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia *“the kuribu was an advocate for the faithful before the god and an advisor to the great gods, but it also guarded the entrance to the temple.”* (Sarna, p. 375) The cherubim were typically depicted in Mesopotamian art as composite figures with the bodies of bulls or lions, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a man. The combination symbolized their strength, mobility, and wisdom. Massive stone statues of guardian cherubs characteristically stood at the entrances to Assyrian temples and palaces, often wearing the face of the reigning king as an indication of his divine power and the gods’ sanction of his rule. The *“cherubim”* of Genesis 3 appear without explanation

or introduction. The use of a definite article in the Hebrew text presupposes a familiarity with them on the part of the reader. The term occurs 91 times in the Bible, most frequently in the prophetic visions of Ezekiel. Carved golden cherubs extended their wings over the ark of the covenant within the Holy of Holies and from the space between them issued the divine voice that spoke to Moses (cf. Exodus 25:18-21; Numbers 7:8-9). Pictorial representations of the cherubim were worked into the cloth curtains of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:31; 36:8,35; 37:7-9). In the Temple of Solomon, two massive golden cherubs, fifteen feet tall, stood behind the Ark in the Most Holy Place and figures of cherubim were carved into the walls and doors of the sanctuary (1 Kings 6:23-35). The vivid imagery of Ezekiel presents the cherubim as many-eyed creatures with four great wings and fantastic forms who bear the throne of God through the heavens amid fiery clouds of glory. Ezekiel first observes the cherubim in his introductory vision on the banks of the Kebar River.

***“I looked and saw a windstorm coming out of the north - an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead, they did not turn as they moved. Their faces looked like this: each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left side the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upwards; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side; and two wings covering its body. Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go without turning as they went. The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright and lightning flashed out of it. The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.”*** (Ezekiel 1:4-14)

The cherubim reappear as the foundation of God’s sapphire throne in Ezekiel’s vision of the temple glory:

*“I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim...The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks...I looked and I saw beside the cherubim four wheels, one beside each of the cherubim; the wheels sparkled like chrysolite. As for their appearance, the four of them looked alike; each was like a wheel intersecting a wheel. As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced; the wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went. The cherubim went in whatever direction the head faced, without turning as they went. Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands, and their wings were completely full of eyes as were their four*



*“The Vision of Ezekiel” by P.J. De Louthembourg*

*wheels. I heard the wheels being called ‘the whirling wheels.’ Each of the cherubim had four faces; one face was that of a cherub, the second the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River. When the cherubim moved, the wheels beside them moved; when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not leave their side. When the cherubim stood still, they also stood still; and when the cherubim rose, they rose with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in them. ... These are the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar*

*River, and I realized they were cherubim. Each had four faces and four wings, and under their wings was what looked like the hands of a man. Their faces had the same appearance as those I had seen by the Kebar River. Each one went straight ahead.”* (Ezekiel 10:1-22)

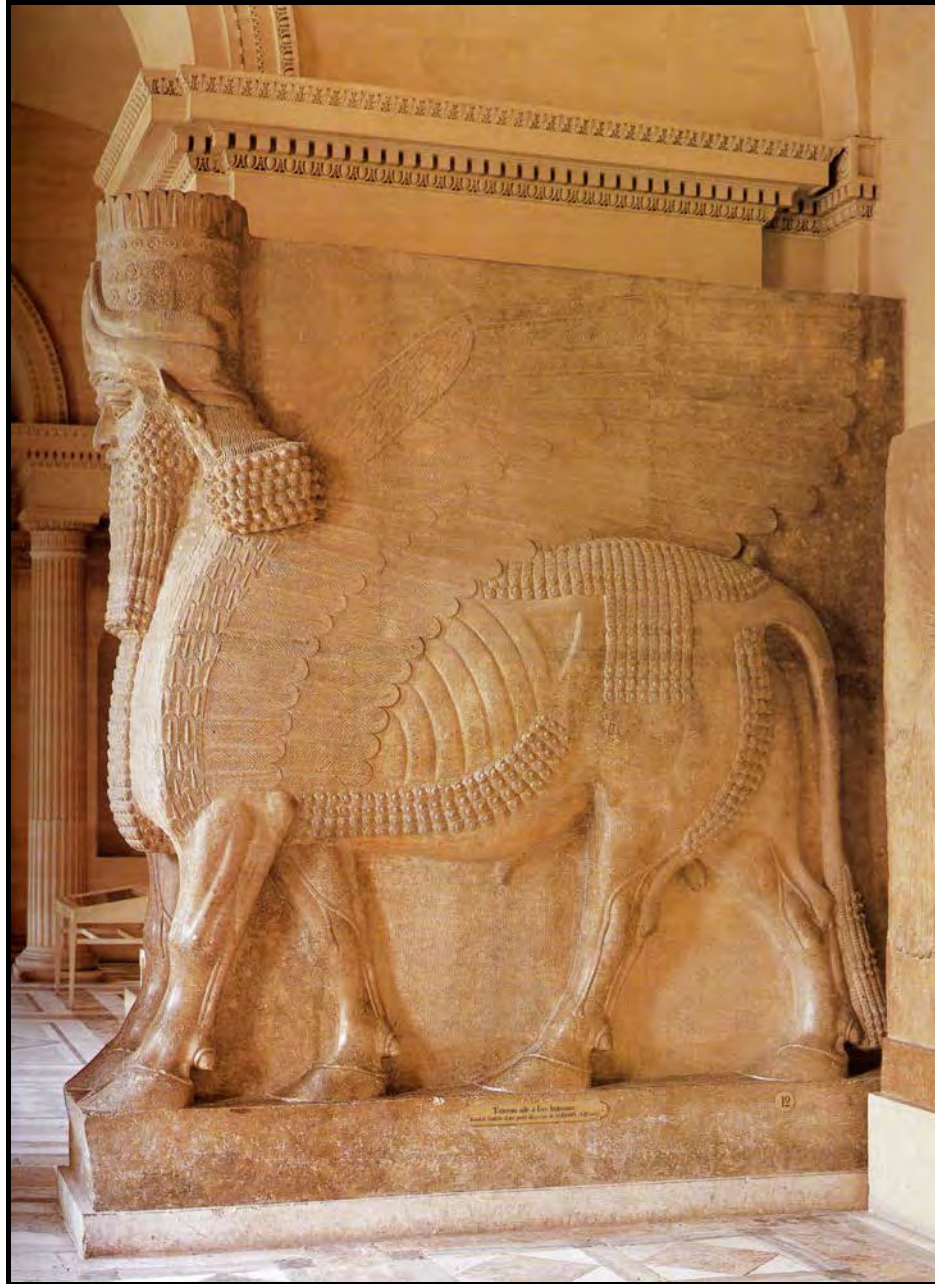


*“The Call of Ezekiel” by B. Picart*

The Psalmist rejoices in the power of God as he declares: *“He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness His covering, His canopy around Him - the dark rain clouds of the sky.”* (Psalm 18: 9-11). The writers of the Old Testament frequently refer to God as He *“Who is enthroned between the cherubim.”* *“Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth!”* (Psalm 80:1; cf. Also 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Isaiah 37:16; Psalm 99:1).

The transformation of the mighty cherubim of Scripture into the tubby little winged babies, or *“Putti”*

(from the Latin *“putus”* - *“little boy”*), which fill the corners of baroque church ceilings must remain a mystery. These are figures from classical mythology where chubby infants with tiny wings are mischievous cupids, the *erotes*, who play the games of the pagan gods using the power of desire to bring both happiness



*“An Assyrian Cherub from the Palace of Sargon I”*

and sorrow to human lives. The artists of the Renaissance seem to have combined this endearing pagan image with the Biblical cherubim. The result is the millions of naked little fat babies fluttering around churches across Europe on diminutive wings. Hebrew scholar Nahum Sarna suggests that the combination may have been the result of *“fanciful rabbinic etymologizing”* which derived the term *“cherub”* from the



Aramaic “*ke-ravia*” which means “*like a little boy.*” (Sarna, p. 375) One of the most striking examples of this unlikely combination is found in Raphael’s famous masterpiece “*The Vision of Ezekiel.*” The artist presents the four faces of Ezekiel’s cherubim as ox, lion, eagle, and man but then goes on to insert to cute little putti supporting the outstretched arms of God.

The Bible refers to numerous ranks of angels without definition or explanation. Jewish apocryphal writings during the inter-testamental period was intensely interested in angels and provided an abundance of additional information. The systematic organization of those categories was left to the great theologians of the early church and the Middle Ages, most notably Pseudo-

Dionysius and later, St. Thomas Aquinas, who fashioned an order of “*celestial hierarchy.*” Within this system, the angels were organized into nine different ranks or choirs which, in turn, were clustered into three triads (groups of three) surrounding God’s throne of glory. The cherubim were included in the second rank of the first triad, surpassed only by the majestic seraphim. Of the cherubim Dionysius reports:

*“The name ‘cherubim’ means ‘fullness of knowledge’ or ‘outpouring of wisdom.’ This first of the hierarchies (including seraphim and cherubim) is hierarchically ordered by truly superior beings, for this hierarchy possesses the highest order as God’s immediate neighbor, being grounded directly around God and thus receiving the primal theophanies and perfections. Hence the description is ‘carrier of warmth’ for the seraphim and ‘outpouring of wisdom’ for the cherubim.*

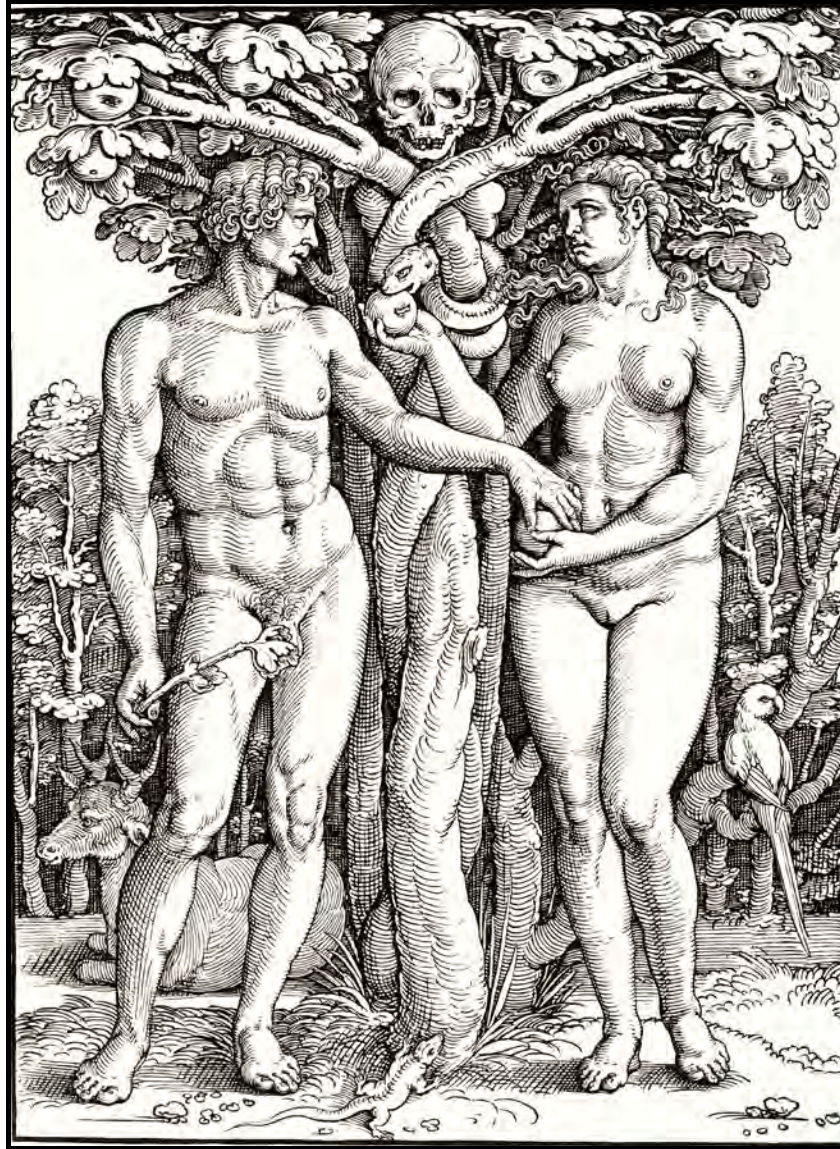


***“The Vision of Ezekiel” by Raphael***

*These names indicate their similarity to what God is...The name cherubim signifies the power to know and see God, to receive the greatest gifts of His light, to contemplate the divine splendor in primordial power, to be filled with the gifts that bring wisdom and to share these generously with subordinates as a part of the beneficial outpouring of wisdom.” (Louth, p. 102)*

The cherubim occupied a position of unique prominence in the religion of the Hebrews as “*the only pictorial representation permitted in an otherwise aniconic (without the use of symbols, images, or icons) religion.*” (Sarna, p. 375) The cherubim were intimately linked with the presence of God in the symbolism of the ark, the tabernacle and the temple. Their appearance here as the Guardians of Eden’s gate serves to reinforce the message that Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden was essentially an excommunication from the presence of God. As previously noted (cf. p. 265), the concept that sinful man cannot stand in the presence of the holy and righteous God without the payment of an atonement price in innocent blood was constantly reiterated in subsequent generations by the architectural design and sacrificial worship of the tabernacle and the temple.

***“And a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”***  
- The weapon of the cherubim appears to have an identity of its own. The fiery sword also bears a definite article in the Hebrew text, thus literally “*the cherubim and the sword of fire*” - indicating a particular reality which would have been familiar to the reader. Sarna argues - “*This is a separate protective instrument, not said to be in the hands of the cherubim.*” (Sarna, p. 30) Fire is frequently associated with God’s judgment in the Old Testament. Psalm 104 declares: “***He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, flames of fire His servants.***” (Psalm 104:4) In the “*Song of Moses,*” God threatens to punish all those who oppose His will with similar language: “***As surely as I live forever, when I sharpen My flashing sword and My hand grasps it in judgment, I will bring judgment upon My adversaries and repay those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood while My sword devours flesh.***” (Deuteronomy 32:40-42) In Psalm 18, the Lord flies through the heavens upon the wings of the cherubim and rains down fire upon His enemies in the lightning bolts which are His arrows: “***Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it...He shot His arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them.***” (Psalm 18:8,14)



*“Adam’s Fall” by Hans Sebald Beham - 1535*

### ***Excursus - The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin***

The Bible teaches that mankind is sinful by nature as the result of the original sin of Adam. In the language of theology, that sinful nature is designated as “*Original Sin*” - in distinction to the individual transgressions of God’s Law which we actually commit which are designated as “*Actual Sin.*” St. Paul carefully distinguishes between the actual sins which we commit and the sinful nature in which we are conceived and born:

***“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”***  
 (Ephesians 2: 1-3)



***“The Generations of Adam”  
 by Hans Sebald Beham - 1530***

Our actual sins are the result and expression of our sinful nature. Thus, from Scripture’s perspective we are sinful primarily because of who we are, not because of what we do. To put it another way, we are not sinful merely because we commit sins: instead, we commit sins because we are sinful. It is of crucial importance to recognize that human sinfulness is much more profound than bad behavior and unfortunate habits. It involves what we are as descendants of fallen Adam.

Original Sin involves both the hereditary corruption of human nature and the imputation of Adam’s guilt to all men. Man had been created in the perfect image and likeness of God ***“in true righteousness and holiness.”*** (Ephesians 4:24) But because of the sin of the first man, the divine image was lost and all mankind

became sinful by nature. All of Adam’s natural posterity would be conceived and born in sin. In Psalm 51:5 David laments: ***“Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*** Jesus warned the pharisee Nicodemus: ***“That which is born of flesh is flesh.”*** (John 3:6).

The Bible teaches that the guilt of father Adam's sin is imputed to all of his natural descendants. Adam was the father of the human race, the first man, the head from whom all men would come. Thus his actions did not involve himself alone but impacted the entire human race. This is the point of Romans 5 where Paul argues that Adam and Christ are uniquely alike in that they are the only two men in all of human history whose actions impacted every other human being. In the case of the first Adam, his disobedience brought death and judgment upon the race. The opposite is true in the case of Jesus, the second Adam. His obedience, in life and death, restored life and salvation for humanity.

***“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men because all sinned...death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses...But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many. Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the man were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”*** (Romans 5:12-19)

Adam's guilt becomes that of mankind. Adolph Hoeneke, a classic Lutheran theologian, makes the point with careful precision:

*“The sole reason why all men born since Adam are already at their birth in a state of corruption, into which Adam plunged by the Fall, is this, that God regards the deed of Adam as their deed, charges them with its guilt, and sentences them to be born in the miserable state of hereditary corruption as one deserved by themselves...The Fall of Adam brings guilt and punishment to all men, not only because of the corruption which is*

*acquired by the Fall and is inherited (“peccatum originis originatum”) renders them damnable before God (“imputatio mediata”), but also because Adam’s Fall itself (“peccatum originis originans”) is imputed to them as their fault (“imputatio immediata”).” (Pieper, 1, p. 539)*

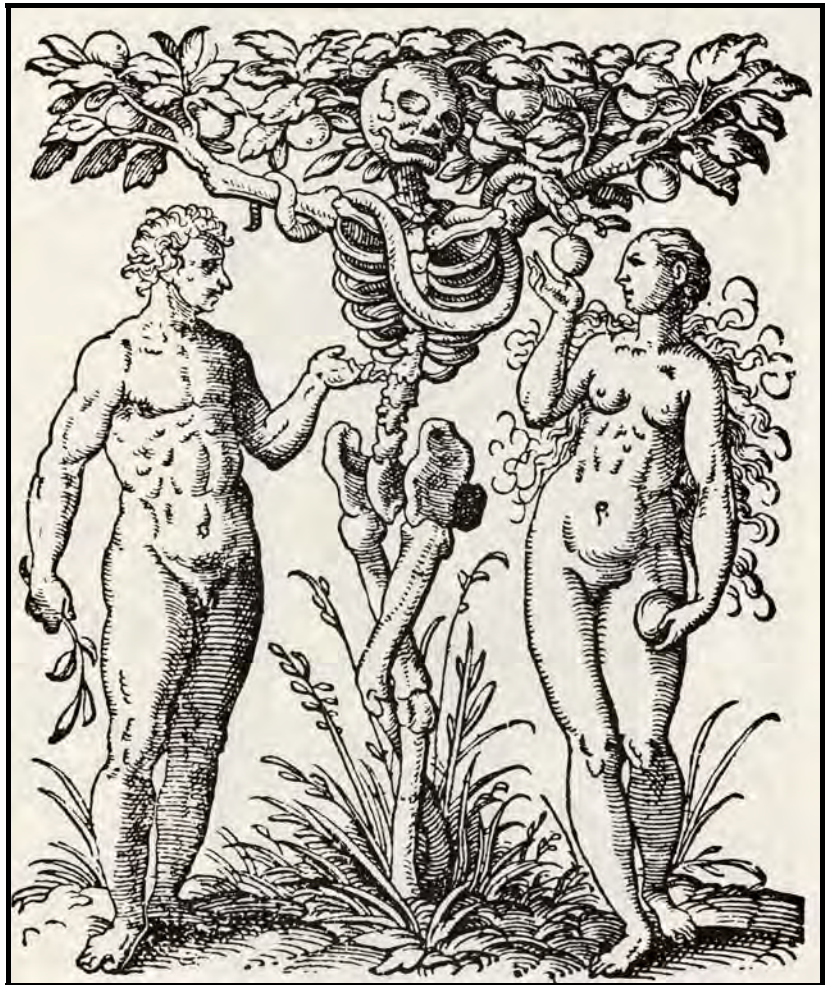
The Lutheran Confessions forcefully assert the doctrine of Original Sin and reject any attempt to mitigate or minimize the Scriptural teaching of the total depravity of man. The *Formula of Concord* presents the most detailed discussion of Original Sin in the Lutheran Confessions. The Formula declares:

*“It is true that Christians should regard and recognize as sin not only the actual transgressions of God’s commandments; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady by which the entire nature is corrupted should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin indeed, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountainhead of all actual sins. And by Dr. Luther it is called a nature-sin or person-sin, thereby to indicate that even though a person would think, speak, or do nothing evil (which, however, is impossible in his life since the fall of our first parents), his nature and person are nonetheless sinful, that is, thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy: and on account of this corruption and because of the fall of the first man the nature or person is accused or condemned by God’s Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ...Original sin in human nature is not only this entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that instead of the lost image of God in man it is at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all of its powers, especially of the highest principle powers of the soul in the understanding, heart, and will, so that now, since the Fall, man inherits an inborn wicked disposition and inward impurity of heart, evil lust and propensity; that we all by disposition and nature inherit from Adam such a heart, feeling, and thought as are according to their highest powers and the light of reason, naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and His chief commandments, yea, that they are enmity against God, especially as regards divine and spiritual things. For in other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to reason, man still has, to a certain degree, understanding,*

*power, and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, however, has been so infected and contaminated by original sin that before God it is of no use...This hereditary evil is so great and horrible that only for the sake of the Lord Christ it can be converted and forgiven before God in the baptized and believing. Moreover, human nature, which is perverted and corrupted thereby, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which, however, is only begun in this life (FCSD, I, 5-6,11-12,14)*

This brutal clarity is necessary, because, as the “*Apology of the Augsburg Confession*” explains, the doctrine of Original Sin is of crucial importance for a proper understanding of and appreciation for the message of the Gospel itself:

*“The knowledge of original sin is necessary. For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood, no one can heartily long and have a desire for Christ, for the inexpressibly great treasure of divine favor and grace which the gospel offers, unless our disease be recognized. As Christ says, **“They that are whole need not a physician.”** (Matthew 9:12, Mark 2:17) The entire righteousness of man is mere hypocrisy and abomination before God, unless we acknowledge that our heart is naturally destitute of love, fear, and confidence in God, that we are miserable sinners who are in disgrace with God.” (Apol. II, 33-34)*



*“The Fall of Man” by Jost Amman - 1587*

John P. Meyer is completely correct that the doctrine of Original Sin is of crucial importance for the entire body of Christian doctrine, for an error here “*will vitiate every other article of faith.*” Professor Meyer writes:

*“We pray God for the enlightenment by the Holy Spirit that we may repentantly acknowledge our inborn depravity. Only then will we be ready to accept gratefully the full remission of our sins for Christ’s sake without any attempt to present some merits of our own before the throne of God and thus to supplement the work of Christ; and only then will we be in a position to really do good works, because we bring them forth not as something produced by our own natural strength, perhaps assisted a little by the Holy Ghost; we bring them forth out of a reborn heart filled with gratitude toward God for His unmerited mercy, yes, as something which Christ has already prepared for us that we should do them (Ephesians 2:10). Thus, the importance of this doctrine is clearly seen. An error at this point will vitiate every other article of faith. If we do not accept original sin as the Scriptures present it, then repentance and regeneration will of necessity be modified accordingly. Christ’s work of redemption will assume an entirely different aspect; justification by faith will cease to be a purely declaratory act of God, in which He pronounces a sinner righteous for Christ’s sake; sanctification will be something less than the expression in thought, word, and deed of a new life pulsating in our hearts. It is with fear and trepidation that we approach the study of this doctrine, but also with exquisite joy that God in His unbounded love has rescued us from the terrible state of inherited total depravity.”*  
(Meyer, p. 249)

The history of Christian theology clearly demonstrates the accuracy of Professor Meyer’s concern. Throughout the ages, whenever the doctrine of original sin and the total depravity of man has been vitiated or denied, the cardinal doctrine of salvation by grace alone has also been vitiated and denied. In the early church St. Augustine was the great champion of the Biblical doctrine of original sin over against the errors of Pelagius and his followers. Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism in the medieval church led to the work righteousness which necessitated the reformation. Even Karl Barth, the great theologian of modern neo-orthodoxy, understood the critical importance of the doctrine of original sin. In his massive commentary on Romans, he argued that Biblical teaching in this matter was unmistakably demonstrated by all of human history and experience:



*“If all the great outstanding figures in history, whose judgements are worthy of serious consideration, if all the prophets, psalmists, philosophers, fathers of the church, reformers, poets, or artists were asked their opinion, would one of them assert that men are good or even capable of good? Is the doctrine of original sin merely one doctrine among many? Is it not, rather, according to its fundamental meaning **the** doctrine which emerges from all honest study of history? Is it not the doctrine, which, in the last resort, underlies the whole teaching of history? Is it possible for us to*



*“The Triumph of Death - Everyone Afterwards“ 1502  
Woodcut by Master A.F.*

*adopt a different point of view than that of the Bible, Augustine, and the reformers? What then does history teach about the things that men do or do not do? Does it teach that some men are at least like God? No, but that - **“There is none righteous, no not one.”** Does it teach that men possess a deep perception of the nature of things or that they have experienced the essence of life? No, but that - **“There is none that understandeth.”** Does it provide a moving picture of quiet piety or of a fiery search after God? Do the great witnesses of truth furnish a splendid picture of prayer? No - **“There is none that seeketh after God.”** Can it describe this or that individual and his actions as natural, healthy, original, right-minded, ideal, full of character, affectionate, attractive, intelligent, forceful, ingenuous, or sterling worth?*

*No - **“They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one.”** (Karl Barth, cited Boice, I, p. 308)*



*“Adam and Eve After Their Expulsion from Paradise” by Johann Anton Ramboux*

## **Genesis Chapter 4** ***The Primeval History of Man***

### ***Introduction***

*“The Book of Genesis has thus far progressed in a very natural and logical sequence of thought. After the story of creation was unfolded as an orderly work, displaying to the fullest extent the mighty power of Him who is its Creator, chapter two informed us more in detail of the conditions of our first parents, enabling us to appreciate fully the situations that were soon to be encountered. Then, in chapter three came the necessary test of man, resulting in his tragic Fall; at the same time we were informed in detail what far-reaching consequences grew out of this initial sin, consequences that burden the human race ever*

*since and help us to understand far more readily what man's lot actually is and why it is as it is. Now, in the fourth chapter, we are shown what transpires as the human race embarks upon its career under the curse of sin but also with the promise of hope as a guiding star. Just what was the development of our race in its steps toward fuller maturity? Unfortunately, students of history and of anthropology too often ignore this one chapter, which happens to be the only authentic record of this early development. Having cast off the only reliable account of man's first deeds and achievements, practically all writers of the present proceed to draw very largely on their own imagination, which happens to be cast in the thought patterns of evolutionistic conceptions. Then they misread the available archaeological hints - for the actual archaeological evidence for the earliest man is not available - and the result is a highly fantastic and entirely incorrect story of man's development from the cave man stage, as it is claimed, to the point where the first higher cultural achievements are found and the historical period actually begins...The chapter before us, being strictly historical and completely correct, serves to set the student of mankind's history right; and, at the same time, it gives to all man a clear account as to how man progressed and how sin grew." (Leupold, I, p. 186)*

### ***Verse 1***

***Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man."***

***"Adam lay with his wife Eve..."*** - In the original text, this phrase uses the Hebrew verb "yada" which literally means "to know." This word refers primarily to knowledge acquired through the sense, experience that can be passed on to others, and practical knowledge. Nahum Sarna offers this helpful definition:

*"Knowing in the Bible is not essentially intellectual activity, not simply the objective contemplation of reality. Rather, it is experiential, emotional, and, above all, relational...For that reason, the Hebrew stem "yada" can encompass a range of meanings that includes involvement, interaction, loyalty, and obligation. It can be used of the most intimate and hallowed relationships between man and wife and between man and God. Significantly, the verb is never employed for animal copulation."* (Sarna, p. 31)

The common Old Testament usage of the term as a euphemism for sexual intercourse (i.e. Genesis 4:17; 19:5,8; 24:16; 1 Samuel 1:19) indicates a realistic recognition of the nature of human sexuality. Human sexual intercourse involves a great deal more than the physical contact of two bodies. Sex for human beings is the physical expression and experience of the most profound emotional and psychological intimacy. Thus to experience intercourse is “to know” one another in a uniquely intimate and personal way. Expressing one’s self sexually is never merely physical for a human being, a simple glandular function involving the stimulation of the appropriate nerve endings. Scripture is completely correct in its assertion that for human beings there can be no such thing as casual sex. Sex necessarily involves the essence of who I am as a being created by God with the unique capacity and need for love (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20). The NIV’s rendering “*Adam lay with his wife Eve,*” while substantially correct, merely substitutes another - considerably less enlightening - euphemism for the act of sexual intercourse, thereby depriving the reader of the insight contained in the original.

“*And she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.*” - In naming his wife, Adam had anticipated that she would become “*the mother of all living.*” (Genesis 3:20) That expectation is now fulfilled. It should be noted that the Hebrew verb “*yada*” in the preceding phrase is in the pluperfect tense which would ordinarily be translated “*Adam had known his wife Eve.*” This more precise translation signals that Adam and Eve were sexually active prior to the Fall and serves to affirm the goodness of human sexuality. St. John Chrysostom, reflecting the negative view of human sexuality held by many of the early fathers, asserts the classic misunderstanding: “*After his disobedience, after their loss of the garden, then it was that the practice of intercourse had its beginning. You see, before their disobedience they followed a life like that of the angels and there was not mention of intercourse.*” (Louth, p. 103) The point of this sentence is not to announce the first act of intercourse but the first conception of a human child. Adam’s first descendant, Cain, was conceived and born in sin after the Fall.

The name “*Cain*” is based on a Hebrew verb which means “*to acquire*” or “*to get.*” In light of Eve’s explanatory comment which follows, we might paraphrase the meaning of Cain’s name as “*I Have Him!*” Just as Adam had demonstrated his faith in God’s promise by giving his wife the name “*Eve*” - “*Life-Giver*” so now Eve also demonstrates her faith in the promise of God by the name which she bestows upon her first son.



*“The Comforts of Eve” by Adelheid Salles-Wagner*

*“She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.”* - With these words Eve explains that name which she has chosen for her first-born son. The NIV interprets the Hebrew preposition *“eth”* as *“with the help of.”* The same Hebrew particle can also serve as an accusative indicator, identifying the direct object. The phrase would then read, *“I have brought forth a man, the Lord (“Yahweh”).”* This was Luther’s understanding of the text. The reformer saw in Eve’s words an unmistakable affirmation of faith in the God’s promise of the coming Messiah. The reformer explains:

*“Cain would be the man who would crush the head of the serpent. For this reason she does not simply call him a man, but “the man of the Lord,” of whom the Lord God had promised...Although this was a false hope, it nevertheless is clear that Eve was a saintly woman and that she believed that promise concerning the future salvation the blessed Seed. And because she believes, she is so happy about her son and speaks of him in such grand terms: “I have gotten the man of God who will conduct Himself more properly and with greater good fortune than my Adam and I conducted ourselves in Paradise. For this reason I do not call him my son, but he is the man of God who was promised and provided by God.” (Luther, 1, p. 242)*

This messianic understanding seems to be most consistent with the context of the

passage. Eve had heard and understood God's promise of her coming Descendant who would crush the serpent's head and deliver mankind from the curse of sin. She wrongly assumed that her first male descendant was the fulfillment of that promise. *"The literal translation is still the best one, 'I have the man, Yahweh!' Poor Eve? She is so mistaken in the identity, but so right in her faith that one of her children will be the Savior. Happy Eve!"* (Naumann, p. 12) This view is supported by Eve's reference to God as "*Yahweh.*" In fact, this is the first time in Scripture that a human being is quoted as referring to God by the sacred covenant title, the name which emphasizes His faithful love and mercy. This is in striking contrast to Eve's uncritical adoption of the devil's references to God as "*el,*" the God of power and might, during the temptation dialog (cf. Genesis 3:1-5). Further indication of Eve's messianic mindset is provided by the unusual use of the word "**man**" (Hebrew - "*ish*") in reference to her newborn son. The word characteristically describes an adult male. This is its only use in Scripture in reference to a young child. This unique usage is an allusion to the creation and fall accounts of the preceding chapters and the promise of an individual male descendant of the woman who would crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15).

There is pathetic irony in Eve's high hopes for her first child. It is clear that while she understood and trusted in God's promise of deliverance she still had no inkling of the deadly destructiveness that sin would bring upon her posterity and the world.

*"In the whole history of the human race there has never been a greater measure of hope for any child than the hope of Adam and Eve at the birth of their first child, Cain...At last the child was born, and Eve held in her arms the one whom she and Adam thought was the deliverer. How delighted they were! They did not know that they actually held in their arms a little murderer and that the tragic history of the human race, written in blood, was about to begin. She had given birth to a killer rather than the Christ."* (Boice, p. 149)

## **Verse 2**

***Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil.***

***"Later she gave birth to his brother Abel."*** - The text goes on to report the subsequent birth of Adam and Eve's second son. There is no indication in the text as

to the interval between the birth of the two brothers. The Hebrew text literally reads “*again she gave birth.*” The fact that the words “*she conceived,*” from the preceding verse, are not repeated in this phrase led to the rabbinic tradition that Cain and Abel were twin brothers, conceived at the same time. This understanding is possible, but not required by the text. In any case, Cain is clearly first born. In the culture of the ancient Near East, the first born son enjoyed definite legal and economic privileges (cf. Genesis 25:32; 27:1-40; Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Nonetheless, the Biblical narrative regular shows God contradicting this practice and choosing the younger brother (i.e. Isaac not Ishmael (Genesis 25:5); Jacob not Esau (Genesis 27); Ephraim not Manasseh (Genesis 48:20); David, the youngest of all of Jesse’s sons (1 Samuel 16:5-13)).



*“Adam and Eve After Their Expulsion from Eden”  
by Julius von Carolsfeld*

The second son is identified in terms of his relationship to Cain - “*his brother Abel.*” This perspective signals that Cain will be the dominant figure in the narrative which follows. Once again, the named bestowed upon the child is indicative of the parents’ state of mind. The Hebrew name “*Abel*” means “*breath*” or “*vanity.*” It is used to describe the brevity and the futility of human existence. “*Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.*” ( Psalm 144:4; cf. also Job 7:16) The same term figures prominently in world-weary Solomon’s description of the futility of all man’s

pleasures and priorities: **“*Meaningless! Meaningless!*” says the teacher. *‘Everything is meaningless!’*”** (Ecclesiastes 1:2). The disparity in the names of the two boys would seem to suggest a significant time interval between their births. Abel’s name appears to indicate his parent’s disillusionment over the fact that Cain did not turn out to be the promised Savior and unknowingly points forward to the fate in store for him as one whose life will be cut short. It is, in the words of one commentator, *“an ominous foreshadowing”* of what is to come. (Waltke, p. 97)

The child scorned by his parents in favor of his older brother is honored and exalted by God. Abel is the first name in the New Testament’s role call of the heroes of faith: **“*By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was considered as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks even though he is dead.*”** (Hebrews 11:4) Jesus refers to Abel as **“*righteous*”** (Matthew 23:35) and includes him among the great prophets of God (Luke 11:50-51). Luther gleefully notes in these events the beginning of a pattern consistent throughout Scripture as God values and exalts that which sinful man despises and scorns:

*“But God reverses all this: Cain He casts aside, and Abel he makes an angel and the first among all the saints. When Abel is slain by his brother, he becomes the first to be freed from sin and from the misfortunes of this world; and throughout the entire later church he shines like a brilliant star through the distinguished testimony concerning righteousness which God and all Scripture gives him. Thus Abel - whom Adam, Eve, and Cain despise as a worthless person - is given a position before God as lord of heaven and earth. After his death he is in a better state than if he possessed a thousand worlds with all their goods.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, pp. 245-246)

**“*Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil.*”** - The text proceeds from the birth of the two boys to the occupations as adults. The introduction of the two sons in terms of the occupations sets the scene for the plot of the murder which follows. Cain, as the first-born son, carries on his father’s vocation. Abel, unlike his brother, is a keeper of flocks. The text does not suggest that either of the two occupations was inferior to the other. Critics who perceive here a parable of the tensions between farmers and herdsmen are indulging in fantasies unsupported by the Biblical text. God’s original command to Adam excluded the slaughter of animals for food (cf. Genesis 1:29). The animals raised by Abel may have provided milk, wool, and skins for clothing.





*“The Offerings of Cain and Abel” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### *Verses 3-4*

*In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering.*

*“In the course of time...”* - The Hebrew text literally reads - *“at the end of the days.”* This phrase can refer to an indefinite period of time, short or long (cf. Genesis 24:55; 40:4) or, more specifically to the passing of a year (cf. Leviticus 25:29; 1 Samuel 1:21). In this context, the latter understanding seems more likely. These events occur at the time of harvest, at the end of the agricultural year. The text seems to suggest that this was already customary or ordinary within the annual calendar.

The worship of Cain and Abel is presented without introduction or explanation. The manner in which each brother’s *“offering”* (Hebrew - *“minha”*) was presented is not specifically defined. The text makes no explicit reference to altars or the burning of the offerings upon an altar. The language, however, clearly implies the ritual offering of sacrifice (cf. Leviticus 2:1-7; 6:12-14; Numbers 15:1-16; 1 Samuel 2:17). No reason

is provided as to why their worship of God took this form. Some suggest that sacrificial worship originated “*spontaneously on man’s part as a natural expression of a devout spirit and of gratitude toward the omnipotent Giver of all good gifts.*” (Leupold, 1, p. 193) The routine and casual manner in which the sacrifices are reported would appear to suggest that this was a normal pattern of activity which may well have originated with their father Adam. The text does not cite a specific divine authorization or command to initiate sacrificial worship in addition to the precedent of God’s provision of animal skins for Adam and Eve’s clothing which is seen by some to have been the first instance of sacrifice (cf. Genesis 3:21). Luther argues emphatically in support of the idea that God had explicitly commanded these sacrifices as the counterparts of the sacraments of the Old Testament. The reformer contends that in the absence of “*outward and visible signs of grace*” it would be impossible to find God in a sinful world.

*“But at this point the question is raised whether they had a word or command to sacrifice. I answer ‘Yes!’ For all the sacred accounts give proof that by His superabundant grace our merciful God has always placed some outward and visible sign of His grace alongside the Word, so that men, reminded by the outward sign and work or sacrament, would believe with greater assurance that God is kind and merciful... To us in the New Testament, Baptism and the Eucharist have been given as the visible signs of grace, so that we might firmly believe that our sins have been forgiven through Christ’s suffering and that we have been redeemed by his death. Thus, the church has never been deprived to such an extent of outward signs that it became impossible to know where God could surely be found.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 248)

Rabbinic tradition reports that the command came by way of father Adam, who specified not only the sacrifice, but the time and place of the sacrifice with the future practice of Israel in mind:

*“They brought their sacrifices on the fourteenth day of Nisan, at the instance of their father who had spoken thus to his sons: ‘This is the day on which, in times to come, Israel will offer sacrifices. Therefore, do ye too bring sacrifices to your Creator on this day, that He make take pleasure in you.’ The place of the offering which they choose was the spot whereupon the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem stood later.”* (Ginzberg, 1, p. 107)

Both brothers presented an offering before the Lord, each in manner appropriate to his means of livelihood. A distinction between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel is clearly suggested. Cain simply brought *“some of the fruits of the soil”* while Abel’s offering is the first and the best - *“fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.”* Once again, the language reflects the sacrificial rituals (cf. Exodus 13:2,15; 23:16; Leviticus 27:26; Deuteronomy 15:19). The New Testament tells us that this subtle distinction was reflective of a crucial difference in the worship attitudes of the two brothers (cf. Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12).



*“Cain and Abel” by Lucas Cranach the Elder*

*“The Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his offering.”* - Note that the Lord’s reaction focuses first on the person and only then on the gift itself. The offering is significant only to the extent that it reflects the attitude of the giver. Scripture reinforces this basic principle of Christian stewardship over and over again (i.e. Jesus and the Widow’s Mite - Luke 21:1-4). It’s now how much you give but why you give it that matters to God. The text does not define the method by which God demonstrated His acceptance of Abel’s offering and His rejection of Cain’s. The Hebrew verb used in this phrase simply means *“to look closely into”* or *“to pay attention to.”* Lucas Cranach’s 1534 woodcut illustration for Luther’s Bible depicts the scene in the manner of traditional Christian art with the smoke of Abel’s offering rising directly up to heaven while the smoke from Cain’s sinks to the ground. Early rabbinic commentary suggested that Abel’s offering was consumed by fire from heaven while Cain’s was not. *“God had respect to Abel’s offering and sent down heavenly fire to consume it, while the offering of Cain was rejected.”* (Ginzberg, 1, p.107) There is certainly ample precedent for this form of incendiary communication, most dramatically in the confrontation between the prophet Elijah and the prophets of

Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38; cf. also Leviticus 9:24; Judges 6:21). Be that as it may, the two brothers clearly understood God's differing reaction to their sacrifices.

**Verses 5-7**

***But on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your do, it desires to have you but you must master it."***

***"But on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor."*** -

Once again, the Lord's attention is directed first to the person and only then to the offering. The value of all worship in the eyes of God is determined by the attitude of the individual. Hebrews clearly indicates that the critical difference between the sacrifice of Cain and that of Abel was the humble faith in which Abel's sacrifice was offered before God: ***"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did."*** (Hebrews 11:4) For Martin Luther, this is *"an outstanding passage"* which expresses the principle of grace over against that of works as clearly as any other in Holy Scripture. Luther summarizes:

*"This text has to do with our conviction concerning justification, namely, that a human being, rather than his works, must be just, and that he is accepted by God without any works, solely through grace, which faith believes and apprehends. Nor does faith, as a work, justify. But it justifies because it apprehends the mercy which is offered in Christ. The true church walks in this trust in God's mercy, together with a humble*



***"Cain Leading Abel to His Death" by J. James Tissot***

*confession of its sins and unworthiness, which hopes that God will grant His pardon through Christ...This passage is altogether worthy of careful consideration.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, pp. 258-259)

**“So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.”** - Cain’s fury is indicative of his state of mind. Instead of humble repentance which acknowledges the appropriateness of God’s rejection of his sacrifice, Cain responds in self-righteous indignation. The Hebrew text emphasizes the intensity of his feelings, literally saying “Cain became very hot” he burned with anger (cf. Genesis 31:36; 34:7; Jonah 4:1,4,9). **“And his face was downcast..”** - The depth of Cain’s anger is reflected in the contorted expression on his face. In an attempt to conceal his rage, he hangs his head like a man who is grieved or crushed. *“Cain telegraphed by his bitter expression the bitterness of his darkened soul.”* (Matthews, p. 269)

**“Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry?”** - God’s refusal to accept Cain’s offering is not merely judgment upon sinful self-righteousness but also the chastening of a loving heavenly Father, deeply concerned about his wayward and defiant son. The text stresses this point by its use of “Yahweh” - the covenant name of God - in these verses. The Lord offers words of gentle reproof and fatherly comfort to the angry young man. The text does not specify the manner of divine communication.

God’s questions are not designed to gather information. The Lord is perfectly aware of everything in Cain’s mind. These three inquiries are intended to enable Cain to see beyond his frustration and grasp the real issue. These inquiries are didactic, designed to teach and enlighten, the man to whom they are addressed. In that sense, this interrogation is similar to God’s conversation with Adam and Eve following their Fall (cf. Genesis 3: 9-13). There too, God used questions to lead our first parents to understand. Cain must be led to understand that God is not the problem, he is. His anger against God is itself blasphemous and must be removed. God seeks to provoke a change of heart within him. Although Cain’s offering had been rejected, God did not abandon him. He comes to him now with a message that is both Law and Gospel. He urges him to recognize and confess his sin. At the same time, He promises forgiveness and acceptance if that repentance takes place. The stern warning of the Law serves and prepares the way for the sweet promise of the Gospel. What a mighty sermon God preached that day! Luther marvels: *“I cannot marvel enough at how Moses was able to compress such great topics into so few words.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 263)

***“But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it.”*** - Cain dare not fail to recognize the true nature of sin. Sin is progressive and powerful. If it is allowed to prevail, its domination will grow ever stronger as it feeds upon itself. That which modern man describes in the exculpatory language of compulsion and addiction is nothing more than sin which has been allowed to gain ascendancy and rule. God warns Cain that he is flirting with disaster. If he continues to indulge his own self-righteous anger it will surely destroy him. The New Testament uses the downfall of Cain as a warning to others about the perilous power of sin. Jude writes that sin can cause men to degenerate to the level of irrational beasts. The apostle warns that all who dabble in such self-destructive behavior have



***“The Murder of Abel” by J. Perault***

***“taken the way of Cain.” “Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do not understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals - these are the very things that destroy them. Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain.”*** (Jude 10,11)

The grim reality of sin’s total domination in the life of the impenitent sinner can be seen in the Apostle John’s only reference to Cain. In his First Epistle, John warns those who allow sin to possess them not to be like Cain who ***“belonged to the Evil One.”*** John asserts that Cain’s fratricide was caused by his own inability to endure the contrast between his brother’s righteousness and his own corruption: ***“Do not be like Cain who belonged to the Evil One and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.”*** (1 John 3:12,13).

The text emphasizes the constant struggle within the Christian who is “*simul justus et peccator*” - that is - “*saint and sinner at the same time.*” “*And so this little section is intended to describe for you the life of the godly in this flesh, namely, that it is a never-ending conflict of the spirit with the flesh.*” (Martin Luther, AE, 1, p. 270) While natural man is a helpless and hopeless slave of sin, the believer can “**master**” temptation as the power of Christ works through the new man that we have become by faith. James Boice offers this excellent summary:

*“Sin is always crouching at our door; indeed, it is sometimes even across the threshold and entrenched upon the hearth. It desires to master us and in many cases has. We must master it. But how? How can we drive the demons of sin out and cleanse this old house in which we live? We cannot do it ourselves. The Lord once told a story of man who was possessed of a devil and drove the devil out. But the devil went and found seven other devils, returned and took possession and **“the final condition of that man was worse than the first.”** (Matthew 12:43-45). We are inadequate for such things. If we would master sin, we must first be mastered by Him who mastered it. We must be the Master’s.”*  
(Boice, p. 202)

This the first appearance of the word “**sin**” in the Bible. The Hebrew noun “*hattath*” literally means “*to miss the mark.*” The Book of Judges uses the word in its original sense to describe the remarkable accuracy of the slingers of the tribe of Benjamin: “***Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.***” (Judges 20:16; cf. also Job 5:24; Proverbs 8:36; 19:2) The menace of sin is depicted as a fierce beast crouched in the doorway and waiting to spring upon its unsuspecting prey (cf. Matthew 7:15; 1 Peter 5:8). In the Akkadian dialect of ancient Mesopotamia, a form of the same word was used to describe demonic spirits which lurked in the doorways waiting to pounce upon the unwary and destroy them. In this context the language may also be an allusion to the role of the Satan/serpent lying in wait to strike the heel of the woman’s Descendant (Genesis 3:15).

The similarity between the language of the final phrase of God’s warning - “***it desires to have you but you must master it***” - and God’s warning to Eve in Genesis 3:16 has already been noted. In both instances the issue is an ongoing struggle for mastery and control. The parallel serves to remind Cain of the earlier consequences of yielding to temptation and allowing the domination of sin.

Cain fails to respond to God’s word of warning and promise. His ominous silence indicates continued defiance and an ongoing refusal to repent. It is evident that Cain’s sinful resentment of his brother Abel continues to fester and grow within his heart.



*“The Murder of Abel” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Verse 8***

***Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go our into the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.***

***“Now Cain said to his brother...”*** - The inherently destructive nature of sin, which in its infancy appears so innocent and benign, is now fully revealed:

*“Now the account proceeds in a drastic manner to show what possibilities for development lay in the sin which had by this time fastened itself strongly upon the man. Possibilities for evil that no man would have suspected lay hidden in sin. All of a sudden it breaks forth and displays to the full its vicious nature and terrible curse. There is no book that so emphatically reveals what a cursed thing sin is as the Bible.*



*Man should know what an octopus fastened its tentacles upon the race when sin took hold of it. With terrible realism the narrative continues.*" (Leupold, pp. 202-203)

The Hebrew text fails to include Cain's comment to his brother. It simply reads - "*And Cain said to his brother Abel...When they were out in the field...*" The NIV's insertion - "*Let's go out into the field*" - follows the lead of the Septuagint and a number of other early translations and commentaries. The "*Midrashim*" (commentaries) of the early rabbis describe the conversation between the two brothers in great detail and with considerable variety. According to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century "*Jerusalem Targum*," for instance, the murder is preceded by a debate about the justice and righteousness of God:

(CAIN) "*There is no world to come, no reward for the righteous, no punishment for evildoers. This world was not created in mercy; neither is it ruled by compassion. Why else has your offering been accepted and mine rejected?*" (ABEL) "*Mine was accepted because I love God. Yours was rejected because you hate him.*" (Graves, p. 91)

Another rabbinic tradition contends that their disagreement was over a woman.

*"To ensure the propagation of the human race, a girl, destined to be his wife was born with each of the sons of Adam. Abel's twin sister was of exquisite beauty and Cain desire her. Therefore he was constantly brooding over ways and means of ridding himself of his brother."* (Ginzberg, 1, p.108)

The specific nature of the comment is irrelevant. The point is that Cain did not act in a moment of passion. His actions were meticulously planned and carefully premeditated. He lured his brother to an isolated place with the intent to kill him. Luther perceives in these words Cain's deliberate design to lull his brother into a false sense of security, leading him to believe that the tension between them has already been resolved. "*Accordingly, Cain is a figure and image of all murderers and hypocrites who, under the guise of piety, kill good men. Possessed by Satan, therefore, he conceals his wrath and waits for his chance. Meanwhile, he speaks with Abel as with a beloved brother, so that he might catch him off guard and overpower*

him more quickly.” (Luther, AE, 1, 271)

**“And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.”**

- The phrase **“his brother”** is repeated seven times in the course of this narrative. This is not merely murder. It is the horrible crime of fratricide, the killing of one’s own brother. The phrase uses Hebrew verb *“harag.”* This is the common term used to indicate an intention act of murder, the deliberate, premeditated taking of human life - to use the modern English idiom - *“cold-blooded murder.”*



**“The Murder of Abel”**

**Luther Bible Woodcut by Virgil Solis - 1560**

The stark simplicity of the Biblical text presents a glaring contrast to the fanciful speculation of the rabbi as to methodology and murder weapon. Some suggest that Abel was beaten with a club and then crushed with a rock. Others, of more gruesome inclination assert that Cain tore his brother’s body apart with his own hands and teeth. One truly imaginative commentator reports that Abel’s gentle nature led to his downfall:

*“Abel was stronger than he and he would have gotten the worst of it, but at the last moment he begged for mercy, and the gentle Cain released his hold upon him. Scarcely did he feel himself free , when he turned against Abel once more and slew him. So true is the saying, ‘Do the evil no good, lest evil fall upon thee.’”* (Ginzberg, 1, p. 109)

The rabbis agree that no blade or grass or tree will every grow upon the ground where Abel’s blood was poured out. Scripture knows of no such fanciful details, nor is it interested in them.

God had warned Adam and Eve that death would come upon their race in the moment of their disobedience. Now, as the innocent blood of Abel soaks slowly into the

ground, the fatal consequences of their sin are clearly revealed. What infinite tragedy! Adam and Eve's first taste of death is not their own but the brutal death of their younger son at the hand of their firstborn. *"The seed of the woman had already - in part - become the seed of the serpent."* (Keil, p. 141)



*"The Cursing of Cain" by Eduard Bendemann*

### *Verse 9*

*Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied, "am I my brother's keeper?"*

*"The Lord said to Cain..."* - The loving God of the covenant (*"Yahweh"*) now speaks to Cain in much the same tone of sadness and bitter regret that He had spoken to Adam and Eve after the Fall. It is striking to note that the Lord remains a God of mercy and compassion even when confronted by the horrible crime of murder.

*"Where is your brother Abel?"* - God's question invites Cain to acknowledge responsibility for his brother's death, to confess his sin, and to seek forgiveness from the Lord. Like the Lord's earlier question to Adam (*"But the Lord God called to the*

*man, “Where are you?”* - Genesis 3:9), this inquiry is not designed to gather information. The parallel is deliberate, designed to indicate that this sin is the result and consequence of the original sin. God knows exactly where Abel is and He is fully aware of the enormity of the crime which Cain has committed. God seeks to arouse Cain’s conscience and lead him to the contrition which the essential first step of all genuine repentance.

**“I don’t know,’ he replied, ‘am I my brother’s keeper?’”** - Adam and Eve had answered God’s questions with evasions and excuses. Cain boldly lies and impudently reject any suggestion of responsibility. It is evident that the sin against which he had earlier been warned had hardened his conscience and is now in full control of his life. The demon crouching at his door has seized him and is in process of devouring him. Cain resorts to sarcasm in a frantic attempt to divert God’s inquiry. **“Am I my brother’s keeper?”** Adam had been appointed “keeper” of the Garden. As a shepherd, Abel had been a “keeper” his flocks and herds. Cain uses a form of the same Hebrew word (“*somer*”) in repudiating any responsibility for his brother’s welfare or whereabouts. In words dripping with brutal sarcasm he is, in effect, asking “*Am I the shepherd’s shepherd?*” The murderer’s callous language indicates no hint of remorse or shame over his brother’s death. James Boice observes:

*“Think how evil this reply is. It contains the first lie and the first human question in the Bible...So greatly had sin mastered him at this point that he not only lied, he lied to God, no doubt thinking that he could get away with it. How greatly sin had worked in less than one generation! The first human question is even worse than a lie. So hard is his heart that he now suggests that his brother, whom he killed, is no responsibility of his. If something had happened to Abel, it was not his fault. In this world of dog-eat-dog it is every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.”* (Boice, p. 203)

Cain’s assertion of absolute personal autonomy, no matter what its potential cost may be in the lives of others, finds its equally destructive counterpart in the irresponsibility of modern Western culture. Our obsession with individual rights and personal choice has wrecked havoc on marriage, family, and community. Most catastrophically, it has resulted in the slaughter of tens of millions of innocent unborn children - the holocaust of abortion. We mindlessly pursue the immediate gratification of our every desire in

a society gone mad with hedonism and materialism. Millions of contemporary Cains defiantly cry out: *“Am I my spouse’s-my children’s -my neighbor’s keeper?”* Having cut ourselves off from one another we have become a people wandering through life in isolation and loneliness despite our abundant prosperity. The mark of Cain rests upon us.



*“Where Is Your Brother Abel?”* by J. James Tissot

### *Verses 10-12*

*The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground it will no longer yield crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”*

*“The Lord said, ‘What have you done?’”* - The gentle questioning is over. In the face of Cain’s intransigent and defiant denial, God issues a pointed accusation. Some translations punctuate this sentence

with an exclamation point rather than a question mark. *“Not a question, but a cry of horror!”* (Sarna, p. 34) God knows what Cain has done and now Cain also knows that God knows. The comforting illusion that his crime could be concealed has been shattered.

*“Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.”* - *“Listen!”* God commands Cain. Just as an innocent man cries out to the judge for justice against his oppressors, so the shed blood of Abel cries out from the ground for justice against his slayer. Job expresses a similar thought when he pleads for justice: *“O earth, do not cover my blood, and let its cry find no resting place.”* (Job 16:18) Jesus alludes to this verse in His denunciation of the stubborn unbelief of the Pharisees and their

persecution of the righteous: ***“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed upon earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berakiah, who you murdered between the temple and the altar.”*** (Matthew 23:35). The New Testament writer to the Hebrews evidently has this text in mind when he asserts: ***“He (Abel) still speaks even though he is dead.”*** (Hebrews 11:4). Hebrews goes on to contrast that cry for vengeance with the message of the redemptive blood of Christ: ***“the Mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”*** (Hebrews 12:24).

Maximus, bishop of the Italian city of Turin during the Fifth Century, argues that the very existence of Abel’s shed blood cried out to God for justice and bound the hardened conscience of his murderer. The silent witness of its existence was more eloquent, powerful and unavoidable than any verbal accusation.

*“The divine Scripture always cries out and speaks, hence God also says to Cain, ‘The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me.’ Blood, to be sure, has no voice, but innocent blood that has been spilled is said to cry out not by words but by its very existence. It makes demands of the Lord not with eloquent discourse, but with anger over the crime committed. It does not accuse the wrongdoer with words so much as bind him by the accusation of his own conscience. The evil deed may seem to be excused when it is explained away with words. But it cannot be excused if it is made present to the conscience. For in silence, and without contradiction the wrongdoer’s conscience always convicts and judges him.”* (Louth, p. 107)

There is also a powerful message of encouragement and assurance for the faithful people of God in times of persecution and oppression. God watches over and protects His own. He will vindicate those who suffer persecution and death for the sake of His truth. He has heard the psalmists’ prayers for vindication:

***“Why should the nations say, ‘There is no God?’ Before our eyes make known among the nations that You avenge the outpoured blood of Your servants. May the groans of the prisoners come before You; by the strength of Your arm preserve those condemned to die.”*** Psalm 79: 10-11)

***“On no account let them escape; in Your anger, O God, bring down***

*the nations. Record my lament, put my tears in Your bottle - are they not recorded on Your scroll? Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.”* (Psalm 56:7-9) As Luther found profound comfort in these words amid the bitter persecution of the Reformation era:

*“These facts, I say, are full of comfort, especially for us who suffer persecution at the hands of the popes and the wicked princes because of our doctrine. They have proceeded against us with utmost cruelty... The blood of all these will not keep silence. In due time it will compel God to come down from heaven and execute on earth a judgment that will be unbearable for the enemies of the Gospel... Therefore, why should we have any doubt that God in His heart considers and counts the afflictions of His children and that He measures our tears and records them on unbreakable tablets.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, pp. 288-289)



*“The Murder of Cain” by Gustav Dore*

It is significant to note that the Hebrew noun “*damim*” (“**blood**”) is plural in this phrase. This usage is consistent in the Old Testament when the subject is bloodshed or bloodguilt. The rabbinical commentaries explain that by the use of the plural form not only the blood of the victim himself but “*also that of the potential offspring now doomed never to be born*” is included. For “*Whoever takes a single life destroys thereby an entire world.*” (Sarna, p. 34)

*“Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground which opened its mouth*

***to receive your brother's blood.***” - For the first time in Scripture man himself is cursed. In Genesis 3, the serpent (Genesis 3:14) and the ground (Genesis 3:17) were cursed, but now the curse of God is laid directly upon a man. God's punishment is never capricious or arbitrary. The punishment always fits the crime. So also in this instance. Cain had spilled out the blood of his brother upon the soil of the field. The lifeblood of man is precious in the sight of God because man was created in God's image and likeness (cf. Genesis 9:6). As punishment for his crime, Cain is forever banished from that ground which had absorbed the blood of his murdered brother. The very earth itself becomes the instrument of his punishment.

***“When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you.”*** - Cain, as a farmer, had earned his livelihood from the abundance of the earth. But now, that is at an end. He is banned from the land upon which he had poured out his brother's blood and so the cultivated soil will no longer yield its fruit to him. This is a significant intensification of the curse upon the earth which God had pronounced to Adam (Genesis 3:18-20). For Adam the fruit of the earth which had been provided naturally in the abundance of Eden now had to be cultivated in wearisome toil. Cain's punishment is much more severe. No matter how hard he works, the land will not respond. He is banned from farming altogether.

***“You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”*** - Cain's punishment is in some ways worse than the death which he deserved. He is expelled from his family and from a relationship with God. For this reason, Luther consistently refers to Cain's punishment as an *“excommunication.”* Deprived of all sense of belonging and identification with a community, Cain becomes a wretched vagabond, rootless and detached. The first murderer, in effect, becomes an object lesson for the rest of humanity, a pathetic figure illustrating the dreadful cost of sin. The Hebrew text uses an intriguing pair of words to describe Cain's drifting derelict life. First he is called ***“restless”*** (Hebrew - *“na”*) which means *“to shake, reel, stagger, or wander.* Jeremiah uses the word to describe the hopeless groping of a blind man as he stumbles lost down the street - ***“Now they grope through the streets like men who are blind.”*** Isaiah uses the same word in reference to the shaking of an earthquake: ***“The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls - never to rise again.”*** (Isaiah 24:20) The text goes on to label Cain as ***“a wanderer”*** (Hebrew - *“nad”*). This noun means *“to meander, move to and fro, or flee in panic.”* The only other passage which combines the two terms is Isaiah 24:20, quoted above.



### ***Verses 13-14***

***Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today You are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from Your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”***

***“Cain said to the Lord...”*** - Cain’s impudent arrogance wilts before the judgment of the Lord, but his attitude of sinful defiance lingers. Unlike Adam and Eve who had not dared to protest the righteous sentence of God, even now Cain presumes to present his grievance before the Lord. The absence of any apparent recognition of sin or any indication of remorse signals that Cain still persists in his stubborn refusal to repent.

***“My punishment is more than I can bear.”*** - In Cain’s opinion, God sentence is excessive. In a manner sadly typical of the impenitent sinner bold impudence



***“The Repentance of King David”  
by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld***

degenerates into whining fear and complaint. There is not acknowledgment that he has sinned against God nor is there any hint of remorse over his brother’s death or the pain which Abel’s murder has caused his parents. Cain’s sole concern is himself. The onset of repentance is always signaled by the end of this sinful obsession with self, and its replacement by contrition and a concern for others.

The classic Biblical expression of genuine repentance was written by another murderer, King David in the aftermath of

the murder of Uriah the Hittite. David’s magnificent penitential hymn, Psalm 51, expresses no interest in evading the painful consequences of his sin nor of mitigating his punishment. As expressed in this psalm, Biblical repentance includes the following five components: (1) unqualified recognition and acknowledgment of the sin - ***“For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.”***; (2) contrition -

genuine sorrow for the sin. Contrition is not to be confused with regret over having been caught or remorse that I must now endure the consequences of my own sin. Every sin is most basically an offense against the holiness of God. Thus, true contrition is heartfelt sorrow that I have offended the holy and righteous God. **“Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are proved right when You speak and justified when You judge.”**; (3) the renunciation of any pretense of self-righteousness and a willingness to rely solely upon the gracious mercy of God in Christ for forgiveness. **“Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions...Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”**; (4) a willingness, wherever possible to undo the damage which sin has caused in the lives of others and to submit to appropriate punishment as an example for others; and, (5) a sincere resolve and conscientious attempt not to repeat the sin in the future.

Every one of these characteristics is missing in Cain. All he’s worried about is saving his own skin. Cain’s only regret is that he has gotten himself into such a mess. In effect, he is challenging the justice and righteousness of God once again, just as he did before his brother’s murder.

**“Today You are driving me from the land and I will be hidden from Your presence.”** - Cain insists that God does not understand the full implication of the sentence He has pronounced. He repeats the two components in God’s curse and in each instance stipulates an additional consequence, which God had evidently failed to consider. The entire lament is an exercise in blasphemous presumption. His complaint that **“You are driving me from the land”** recalls God’s action in driving Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3: 24). The allusion is drawn by the use of the same verb (Hebrew - “*garas*”) in both verses. But this will also mean the **“I will be hidden from Your presence.”** In his pre-occupation with himself, Cain fails to recognize that it is his own impenitent sin which removes him ever further from the presence of the righteous and holy God. Within the self-perpetuating dynamic of sin, as the sinner chooses to follow the evil inclination of his hardening heart God **“give him up”** so that his sin becomes its own punishment (cf. Romans 1:18-32).

**“I will be a restless wanderer on the earth and whoever finds me will kill me.”** - Cain fears that his banishment will result in death. In his all-consuming self-obsession Cain does not recognize the stunning irony of his words. He who murdered his brother now frets lest he meet the same fate! Cain presents us with a pathetic picture

of the condition of sinful humanity. Donald Barnhouse offers this perceptive analysis of the way of Cain.

*“He started with human reason as opposed to divine revelation; he continued in human wilfulness instead of divine will; he opposed human pride to divine humility; he sank to human hatred instead of rising to divine love; he presented human excuses instead of seeking divine grace; he went into wandering instead of seeking to return; he ended in human loneliness instead of in divine fellowship. To be alone, without God, is the worst thing that earth can hold, to go thus into eternity is indeed the second death.”* (Boice, p. 208)



**“Cain Killing Abel” by Albrecht Dürer - 1511**

*as a wife...Mahalalel took for himself a wife, Diinah, the daughter of Barakiel, the daughter of his father’s brother, as a wife...”* (Jubilees 4:9-15)

Cain’s concern about his personal safety in the face of potential acts of vengeance is only the first in a series of references in this chapter to an apparently growing world population. Who are these people whose retribution Cain feared and where did they come from? Scripture makes it very clear that Adam and Eve are the parents of the race. Every human being comes from them. Thus, in the first generations, brothers and sisters married one another. No doubt, for many generation thereafter marriages which today would be considered incestuous were the rule rather than the exception. The apocryphal *“Book of Jubilees,”* written during the inter-testamental period around 200 B.C. reports: *“And Cain took his sister Awan as his wife...And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she bore nine more children...Seth took Azura, his sister, as his wife...Enos took Noam, his sister as his wife...Kenan took for himself a wife, Mualeleth, his sister,*

### **Verse 15**

***But the Lord said to him, “Not so; if anyone, kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.***

***“But the Lord said to him...”*** - The NIV’s translation of the opening words of God’s response to Cain, ***“Not so”*** follows the reading of the Septuagint text. This negative answer indicates God’s rejection of Cain’s complaint that his punishment is excessive. This reading seems preferable to the KJV’s ***“Therefore”*** in light of what follows. The Lord dismisses Cain’s complaint against the severity of His judgment. Nonetheless, in His mercy, God assures Cain that He will protect and preserve his life with a solemn decree that Cain remains under the protection of God and may not be harmed. God’s assurance is confirmed in two ways. First, by the formal declaration that blood vengeance against Cain will be fully and severely punished - ***“If anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.”*** Some among the rabbis understood the ***“seven times over”*** language literally to mean that seven members of the offending family would be killed or that the vengeance would continue to the seventh generation (cf. Sarna, p. 35). The consequence of this understanding would be the endless perpetuation blood feuds as one death led to seven which led to forty-nine, etc., the very opposite of God’s purpose here. In this context, it is more likely that seven carries its customary figurative meaning of completeness. ***“Seven as a figure of speech indicating completeness or fullness the certainty and the severity of God’s vengeance against a vigilante.”*** (Matthews, p. 278)

In addition to His solemn prohibition and decree, God provides Cain with the protection of a ***“sign”*** or ***“mark”*** - ***“Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.”*** The infamous ***“mark of Cain”*** has been widely and persistently misunderstood. It is no exaggeration to describe this phrase as ***“a seedbed of confusion.”*** (Matthews, p. 278) Most infamously, defenders of racism have argued that the ***“mark of Cain”*** meant that Cain’s skin was turned black and that this punishment from God was the origin of the earth’s non-white races:

*“The suggestion that Cain’s mark was blackness was advanced in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe and was popularized a century later in America by Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism. In the early twentieth century, writers such as Ellen Bristowe and Charles Carroll gave Cain’s traditional association with evil distinctly racial dimensions when they*

*claimed that he married a black wife or had black skin. These shifting images of Cain - as a white Adamite who deigned to associate with inferior beings, or as the first black - give some sense of the protean role he has played in readings of Genesis concerned with racial difference.”* (Haynes, p. 15)

Mormon Elder Bruce McConkie expresses the classic doctrine of his church in this way: *“As a result of his rebellion, Cain was cursed with a dark skin; he became the father of the Negroes and those spirits who are not worthy to receive the priesthood are born through his lineage.”* (Tanner, p. 265) Brigham Young insisted: *Cain slew his brother and the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin.”*



*“Cain and Abel” from the “Lübecker Bibel” - 1494*

One of Young’s successors, Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president of the Mormon Church, heartily concurred and offered this remarkably offensive definition of the Mark of Cain.

*“What was that mark? It was a mark of blackness. That mark rested upon Cain, and descended upon his posterity from that time until the present. Today, there are millions of the descendants of Cain, through the lineage of Ham in the world, and the mark of darkness still rests upon them.”* (Tanner, p. 265)

This view must be rejected simply on the basis of its repugnant racism. But aside from the issue of racism, any interpretation which considers the “*mark of Cain*” to be a stigma or additional punishment is clearly contrary to the text of Genesis 4. The Hebrew text literally reads - “*God placed a sign for Cain.*” The mark of Cain was a not a bane but a blessing. It was intended by God to assuage Cain’s fears and assure him of protection from his foes. It could, perhaps, have been a physical mark of ownership or sign of identity. The word “*sign*” is used in that sense in Ezekiel chapter 9 as the faithful remnant who grieve over the fate of Jerusalem receive the mark of God upon their foreheads so that they might be spared from the impending destruction of the city (cf. Ezekiel 9:3-6). However, it may also have been a onetime event or action. The same word is also used in reference events or actions which God uses to reassure or protect His people. Thus, for example, the rainbow after the Flood is the sign of God’ gracious promise (cf. Genesis 9:,12-13,17) and the blood on the doorposts and the unleavened bread of the Passover are signs of God’s protection and preservation of Israel (Exodus 12:13; 13:9). “*Cain is banned and blessed. He is a marked man in a positive sense. He leaves God’s presence but not God’s protection.*” (Hamilton, p. 235)

### ***Verses 16-17***

***So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain lay with his wife and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch.***

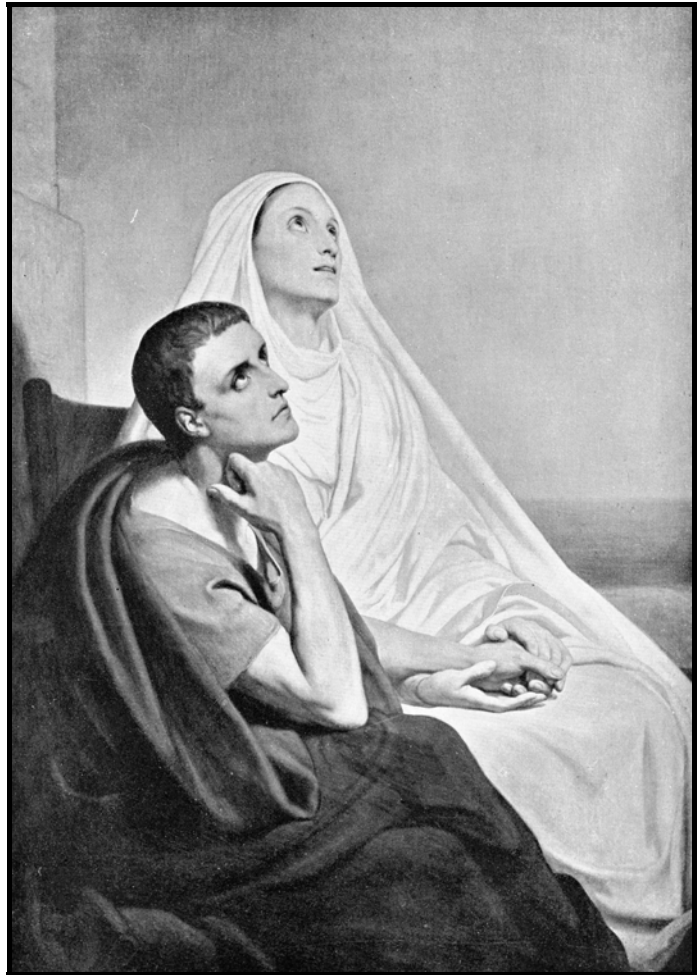
“***So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence...***” - The just judgment of God is carried out immediately. Like his fallen parents before him, Cain is banished from the presence of God (cf. Genesis 3:22). St. Athanasius correctly notes the correlation between Cain’s sinfulness and his inability to remain in the holy presence of God:

*“By means of righteousness, we come into God’s presence, as Moses did when he entered the thick cloud where God was. On the other hand, by the practice of evil a person leaves the presence of the Lord. For example, Cain, when he killed his brother, left the Lord’s presence as far as his will was concerned.”* (Louth, p. 110)

The divine Judge had decreed: “***You will be a restless wanderer upon the earth.***” (Genesis 4:12). The text reports the fulfillment of that decree - “***and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.***” The name “***Nod***” is a play on the Hebrew word “*nad*”

(English - “wanderer”) which the Lord had used to identify Cain. Thus, the phrase might more literally be translated “*and lived in the land of wandering.*” Cain had become a homeless exile, a man without a country, constantly moving from place to place without rest or respite. The designation “*east of Eden*” serve to recall Adam’s banishment from the Garden and the mighty Cherub guardian whose fiery sword bars the way to Paradise (cf. Genesis 3:24)

**“Cain lay with his wife and she became pregnant...”** - Now begins the line of Cain, arrogant and violent, filling the earth with the endless pursuit of their passions. In his immortal classic *The City of God*, St. Augustine divides the entirety of our race into two communities, “*those who live according to God,*” and “*those who live according to man.*” “*And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.*” (Augustine, XV, 1) That great teacher of the church contended that the origin of the two cities can first be observed in the lives of Cain and Abel and in the Genesis record of death and births which come from them (in the case of Abel, through Seth who replaces him):



***St. Augustine and his mother Monica***”

*“For this whole time, or world age, in which the dying give place and those who are born succeed, is the career of these two cities of which we treat. Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the first-born and he belonged to the city of men; after him was born Abel who belonged to the city of God...When these two cities had begun to run*

*their course by a series of deaths and births the citizen of this world was the first-born, and after him the stranger in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestinated by grace, elected by grace, by grace a stranger below, and by grace a citizen above...Accordingly it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns until the time of its reign arrives when it shall gather together all in the day of the resurrection, and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their Prince, the King of the ages, time without end.” (Augustine, XV,1)*

The line of Cain is traced in seven generations accompanied by brief observations about the character and activities of its most prominent representatives. The genealogy demonstrates not only the disruptive consequences of sin among Cain’s descendants, but also the fulfillment of God’s promise of protection for Cain.

**“And she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch.”** - The first son of Cain cited in the genealogy is named **“Enoch”** from a Hebrew word which means *“dedication,”* anticipating his role as the dedicator of the world’s first city. There are three other Enochs in the book of Genesis: the son of Jared in the line of Seth who walked with God (Genesis 5:18-24); the son of Midian and grandson of Abraham (Genesis 25:4); and, the first-born son of Reuben and the grandson of Jacob (Genesis 46:9).

**“Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch.”** - The Hebrew text is somewhat ambiguous in this phrase. The NIV’s translation which identifies Cain as the builder of the city, while linguistically possible, appears to contradict God’s decree that Cain was to remain a rootless vagabond for the remainder of his life. The syntax of the Hebrew original phrase strongly suggests that Enoch, rather than Cain, was actually the first city-builder. In this view, the phrase should be translated - *“Enoch was then building a city and he named it after himself.”* To name a city after yourself is just the kind of arrogance and presumption that one might expect from the son of Cain (cf. also Deuteronomy 3:14; 2 Samuel 5:9; 12:28).





*“The Building of the First City” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Verses 18-19***

***To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech. Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zilah.***

***“To Enoch was born Irad...”*** The next three generations in the line of Cain are listed without comment or elaboration. The names themselves are obscure and subject to a variety of interpretation. ***“Irad”*** may be drawn from an Arabic root which refers to huts built from cane stalks or reeds. If this is the case, then Enoch and Irad are linked by their common identification as builders and founders of settlements. The next two names, ***“Mehujael”*** and ***“Methushael”*** both contain ***“el”*** the Hebrew word for God. ***“Mehujael”*** probably means ***“God gives life”*** while ***“Methushael”*** means ***“man of God.”*** Significant caution should be exercised in any attempt to deduce any conclusions about the character or activities of the descendants of Cain from these names. While these names could possibly indicate some residual recognition and worship of the true God among the descendants of Cain, other, less optimistic possibilities are equally plausible. Leupold notes:

*“That may indicate that occasionally a Cainite was devout or at least had better aspirations, or it may be traceable to the borrowing of names by the Cainites from the Sethites. Many a man has a name of the noblest meaning without even being aware of it. (Leupold, p. 219)*

**“Lamech”** - the final name in this genealogy - is the seventh generation from Adam. A bold and violent man, he is the central figure in the genealogy of Cain. His family and activities are described at some length. The etymology of the name **“Lamech”** is problematic. Sarna suggests that its meaning can be obtained from a similar word in Arabic means *“a strong young man.”* (Sarna, p. 36) Lamech holds the dubious distinction of being the first to abandon the divine institution of marriage as the monogamous life-long relationship of a man and a woman. The fact that polygamy originates among the descendants of Cain indicates a tacit condemnation of this deviation from the pattern of divine institution. Lamech’s two wives are **“Adah”** and **“Zillah.”** Casutto argues that the two names reflect charming feminine virtues and cites the parallel of the lover’s praise of his beloved in the *“Song of Songs”*: **“Show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.”** (Song of Songs 2:14). **“Adah”** refers to an *“ornament”* and thus refers to the beauty of the lady who bears this name. The name recurs in Genesis in reference to the wife of Esau (Genesis 36:2) **“Zillah”** describes the tinkling sound produced by a cymbal or small bell and is an allusion to the sweetness of the female voice.

### ***Verses 20-22***

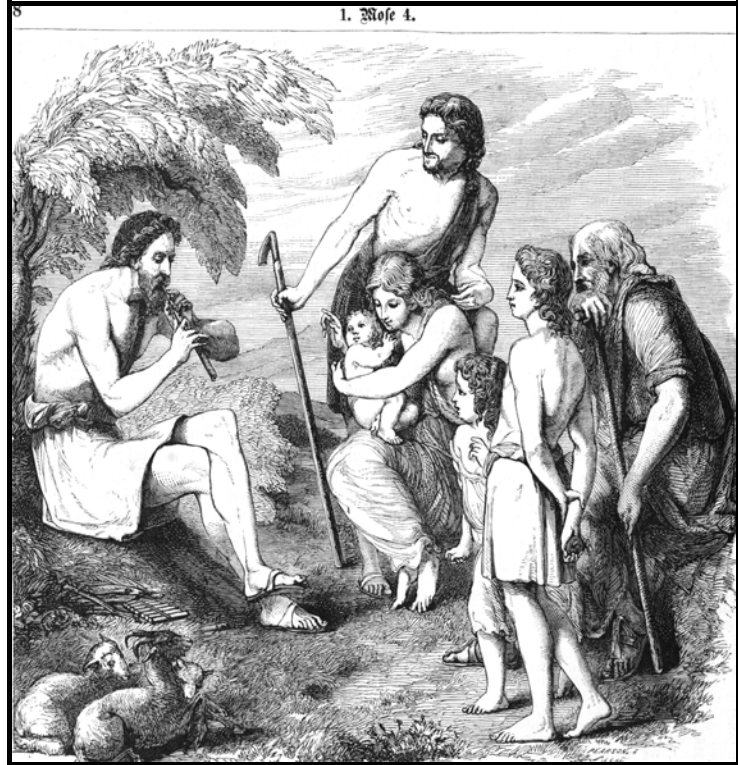
***Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.***

**“Adah gave birth to Jabal...”** - The names are each of the three sons of Lamech - Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal - are all derived from the same root which means *“to yield”* or *“to produce.”* In this way the text emphasizes their inventiveness and productivity, attributing fundamental cultural and technological advances to each of them. Adah’s first son, Jabal, **“was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.”** The language here is much broader than the earlier reference to Abel who **“kept flocks”** (Genesis 4:2). While **“flocks”** consist of sheep and goats, **“livestock”** includes all sorts of domesticated animals, sheep, goats, cattle, horses, donkeys, even camels. In

keeping with the needs of his occupation, Jabel is a migratory nomad - ***“the father of those who live in tents.”*** The Bedouin of the modern Near East continue to reflect this life-style in the contemporary world.

***“His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.”*** -

Jubal is the first musician. The two instruments mentioned - ***“the harp and the flute”*** - represent stringed and wind instruments (cf. Job 21:12; 30:31). The harp or lyre (Hebrew - *“kinnor”*) is frequently mentioned in Scripture. It was the favorite instrument of David (1 Samuel



***“The First Musical Instrument”  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration***

16:23). The ***“flute”*** seems to have been a reed or Pan pipe. In this context the term is generic, a reference to wind instruments of various kinds. The final chapter of the Book of Psalms describes the importance of instrumental music in the worship of ancient Israel:

***“Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens! Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with tambourine and dancing, praise Him with the strings and flute, praise Him with the clash of cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!”*** (Psalm 150)

Zillah’s son is also credited with a crucial role in the development of human culture and technology: ***“Tubal-Cain who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron.”*** The NIV’s translation ***“forged”*** may be a bit presumptuous, implying the ability to smelt and refine metals in a relatively sophisticated manner. The Hebrew text literally



*“Tubal-Cain and Naamah” by Hartmann Schedel*

means “to hammer” or “to sharpen.” The compound name “*Tubal-Cain*” is most unusual. In this context “*Cain*” is probably not a reference to the son of Adam and Eve whose name was derived from a phonetically similar verb which means “to get” or “to acquire” (Genesis 4:1). It is drawn, instead from a Semitic word for “blacksmith.” The NIV’s translation indicates that Tubal-Cain forged “*all kinds of tools*,” applying the Hebrew participle to objects rather than individuals. The original text is obscure. It literally reads - “*Tubal-Cain was a hammerer*

*of all those who work bronze and iron.*” It appears that the words “*the father of*” which occur in each of the preceding generations, were omitted from the text at some point in its transmission. Their re-insertion allows the text to be read in a manner consistent with the preceding phrases - “*Tubal-Cain was a hammerer, the father of all those who work bronze and iron.*” Some perceive in these words an ominous allusion to origin of weapons and warfare. The rabbinic commentaries note: “*Cain committed murder, and Tubal-Cain, the first who knew how to sharpen iron and copper, furnished the instruments used in war and conflict.*” (Ginzberg, 1, p. 118) This view is supported by Lamech’s boastful “*Song of the Sword*” in the verses which follow. In a more balanced fashion, contemporary poet Charles Mackay notes the dual possibilities of mankind’s advancing technology in his poem “*Tubal Cain*”:

*“Old Tubal Cain was a man of might in the days when the Earth was young;  
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright the strokes of his hammer rung;  
And he lifted high his brawny hand on the iron glowing clear,  
Til the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers and fashioned the sword and spear.  
And he sang, ‘Hurra for the handiwork! Hurra for the spear and sword!  
Hurra for the hand that shall wield them well, for he shall be king and lord.’*”

*To Tubal Cain came many a one, as he wrought by his roaring fire;  
And each one prayed for a strong steel blade as the crown of his desire.  
And he made them weapons sharp and strong till they shouted loud with glee,  
And gave him gifts of pearl and gold, and spoils of the forest free;  
And they said, 'Hurra for Tubal Cain, who hath given us strength anew!  
Hurra for the smith, hurra for the fire, and hurra for the metal true.'*

*But a sudden change came o'er his heart ere the setting of the sun,  
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain for the evil he had done;  
He that men with rage and hate, made war upon their kind,  
That the land was red with the blood they shed in their lust for carnage blind.  
And he said, 'Alas that I ever made, or the skill of mine should plan,  
The spear and the sword for men whose joy is to slay their fellow man.'*

*"And for many a day old Tubal Cain sat brooding o'er his woe;  
And his hand forebode to smite the ore, and his furnace smouldered low.  
But he rose at last with a cheerful face, and a bright courageous eye,  
And bared his strong right hand for work while the quick flames mounted high!  
And he sang, 'Hurra for my handicraft!' And the red sparks lit the air;  
'Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made!' and he fashioned the first  
ploughshare.*

*And men, taught wisdom from the past, in friendship joined their hands;  
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall, and ploughed the willing lands;  
And sang, 'Hurra for Tubal Cain! Our staunch good friend is he;  
And for the ploughshare and the plough to him our praise shall be;  
But while oppression lifts its head, or a tyrant would be lord  
Though we may thank him for the plough, we'll not forget the sword.'"*

The list of Lamech's children concludes with "**Naamah**" (Hebrew - "lovely") the sister of Tubal-Cain, a daughter born to Zillah. While no further information is provided about this young lady, her inclusion in the list serves to complete and balance the list of Lamech's descendants, two children to each of his two wives. The rabbis were divided on the nature of this young lady. Some taught that she used her beauty to lure men to idolatry. Others insisted that Naamah became the wife of Noah and that in this way the line of Cain survived the devastation of the Flood. (Ginzberg, 5, p. 146)



*“Lamech and His Wives” by Hartmann Schedel*

### *Verses 23-24*

*Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.”*

*“Lamech said to his wives...”* - The song which follows is often titled *“Lamech’s Sword Song.”* It is the first recorded example of human poetry characterized by carefully balanced parallelism. But there is no trace of beauty or nobility here. This is a paean to arrogance and brutality. In the original text, these words are linked to the preceding description of the metal-working skills of Tubal-Cain. *“We claim that approach then to be correct which pictures Lamech as handling one of the weapons just manufactured by his son Tubal Cain and as sensing the possibilities that lie in such a weapon.”* (Leupold, p. 222) Standing before the captive audience of his two wives, Lamech gloats over his ability to destroy anyone whom he perceives to be his enemy. It is not entirely clear whether he is bragging about a murder which he has already committed or merely issuing a confident threat that he will destroy anyone who offends or injures him. The latter would appear to be the case as the bloodthirsty brute eagerly anticipates the havoc that he will inflict upon his enemies. The phrases

occur in parallel couplets, the second restating and intensifying the first. Lamech boasts that his revenge will know no bounds. His enemy will be destroyed whether he is a grown man or a mere youth. The slightest wound or injury will result in death for those who recklessly dare to confront him. God had promised to avenge the life of Cain “*seven times over*” (Genesis 4:15). Great Lamech will avenge himself “*seventy-seven times.*” The family of Cain has come full circle. This line began in fratricide and it concludes in bloodthirsty braggadocio.

The legends of the Hebrews report the fanciful tale of the murder of Cain in the seventh generation by his great grandson Lamech. Some among the rabbis had taught that the mark of Cain was a horn protruding from his forehead, indicative of his violent animalistic temperament. In this tale, that horn leads to his death.

*“The end of Cain overtook him in the seventh generation of men and it was inflicted upon him by the hand of his great-grandson, Lamech. This Lamech was blind, and when he went a-hunting, he was led by his young son, who would apprise his father when game came in sight and Lamech would then shoot at it with his bow and arrow. Once upon a time, he and his son went on the chase, and the lad discerned something horned in the distance. He naturally took it to be a beast of one kind or another, and he told the blind Lamech to let his arrow fly. The aim was good and the quarry dropped to the ground. When they came close to the victim, the lad exclaimed, ‘Father, thou hast killed something that resembles a human being in all respects, except it carries a horn on its forehead!’ Lamech knew at once what had happened - he had killed his ancestor Cain, who had been marked by God with a horn. In despair, he smote his hands together, inadvertently killing his son as he clasped them.”*  
(Ginzberg, 1, pp. 116-117)

In 1493, Renaissance scholar Hartmann Schedel undertook the ambitious project of retelling the entire history of the world. His work, richly embellished with ornate woodcuts, was published by Anton Koberger in the German city of Nuremberg under the title “*The Nuremberg Chronicle.*” The opening segment of the work dealt with creation, the fall and their aftermath. Illustrated family trees wind their way through the printed text. Schedel reflected the Hebrew myth in his depiction of Lamech with the blank eyes of a blind man, holding a bow in his hands. His two wives stand by his side.

### ***Verses 25-26***

***Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him. Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.***

***“Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son...”*** - The concluding verses of the chapter provide the transition to the genealogy of Seth which will follow. They are a bright ray of hope in the midst of the gloom that has prevailed to this point. The narrative of Genesis chapter 4 is bracketed between the births of two sons - Cain at the beginning and Seth at the end. In each instance, Eve chooses the boy's name in a manner that describes her perception of the significance of his birth. The high hopes that she had entertained for Cain, her firstborn, were dashed in the brutal reality of fratricide. Now, with the birth of this child, Eve dares to hope once again. The language of the text - ***“Adam lay with his wife again”*** - provides no indication of the duration of the interval between these events. It neither requires nor suggests that intercourse between Adam and Eve had been interrupted since the death of Abel or that no other children, either sons or daughters, were born during the interval. Augustine is correct in his assertion:

*“It is quite possible that when Adam was divinely inspired to say, after Seth was born, ‘God has given me another seed for Abel whom Cain slew,’ there is no implication here that Seth was the next born in the order of time but only that he was destined to be a fit heir in the order of holiness.”* (Louth, p. 115)

This is the first instance in Scripture where the term ***“Adam”*** is specifically used as a proper name, occurring without the articles of prepositions which have previously accompanied it. This would seem to suggest that from this point on ***“Adam is under consideration as an individual more than as the first ‘man,’ as his name signifies.”*** (Leupold, p. 226). As in the previous instances of Cain and Abel, Eve takes the initiative for the naming of the child. The name which she selects, ***“Seth,”*** is based on a Hebrew word which means ***“to set in place of”*** or ***“to substitute.”*** Eve defines the significance of the name herself with the declaration - ***“God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.”*** Her words breathe a spirit of confidence and joyful hope. ***“It would appear that the first round is won by the serpent in the murder of righteous Abel, but the gift of Seth insures that the promise***



*will stay alive through Eve, who is found, after all, to be the 'mother of all living.'*" (Matthews, p. 290)

***"Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh."*** - The vitality and viability of this hope of salvation through the promised Descendant of the woman (Genesis 3:15) is demonstrated by the birth of a son to Seth. The language closely parallels the announcement of the birth of Cain's son Enoch earlier in the chapter (cf. Genesis 4:17). The boy is named ***"Enosh,"*** a Hebrew word which like Adam means ***"man"*** but which also carries the connotation of frailty or weakness. There is no bold self-confidence here but a humble recognition of the vulnerability of man in a sinful world.



***"The Family of Seth" by Hans Sebald Beham***

***"At that time, men began to call on the name of the Lord."*** - The various accomplishments and activities of the descendants of Cain had been described in vivid detail. They pioneered the cities, established the arts, and forged great weapons. In clear, and obviously deliberate contrast, only one activity is ascribed to the line of Seth, the origin of prayer and the formal worship of God. The phrase ***"to call upon the name of the Lord"*** is the customary description of formal worship in the Book of Genesis (Genesis 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25). Isaiah uses the same language to lament the neglect of public worship among the Israelites in the dark days of the Babylonian Captivity: ***"No one calls on Your name or strives to lay hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins."*** (Isaiah 64:7) This emphasis upon the worship of God is the logical consequence of the Sethites' realistic recognition of their own frailty and vulnerability. ***"The very next statement now goes on to show what this family did when their own frailty became clearly apparent to them: they turned all the more eagerly to their God and sought***

*Him, making a regular and public practice of it in worship.”* (Leupold, p. 227) The man who imagines himself self-sufficient and invulnerable has no need for God and no interest in Him. The original text uses the sacred Name of God “*Jahweh*” in this phrase. Thus, to the consternation of those who in their own arrogance assert the gradual evolution of religious consciousness from primitive spiritism, to polytheism, and only finally to monotheism, Scripture contends that a faithful remnant remained from the very beginning who maintained the worship of “*Jahweh*” the one true God. Luther finds in these words the infancy of the true Church and the worship of Christ:

*“Thus, after the commotion occasioned by Cain in Adam’s household the generation of the godly gradually increases, and a small church is formed in which Adam, as high priest, rules everything by the Word and sound doctrine. Moses states that this had its beginning at about the time of Enos’ birth. Although his name indicates that at that time the church was hard pressed by some extraordinary misfortune, nevertheless, through His grace and mercy God again raised her up and gave her this added spiritual blessing, that they could meet in a definite place, preach, pray, sacrifice...Here we see the Promised Seed at war with the serpent and crushing his head...What better and more useful message could Adam and Seth preach than the Savior Christ who was promised to their descendants?”* (Martin Luther, 1, p. 328)

Some imagine a conflict between this text and the words of Exodus 6:3 where God says to Moses: **“I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by My name the Lord, I did not make Myself known to them.”** (cf. also Exodus 3: 13-15) In view of the fact that the sacred Name “*Jahweh*” occurs 162 times in the Book of Genesis and its history of the patriarchal era (34 of them in direct discourse) it is evident that Exodus 6 does refer to the mere knowledge or use of the sacred name itself. The patriarchs and their descendants were obviously familiar with the Name. But Bible names generally, and the sacred Name of God preeminently, are a great deal more than mere identifying labels. Bible names are designed to provide profound insight in the nature and identity. God’s disclosure of His sacred Name to Moses upon Sinai signals the beginning of an entirely new era in God’s gracious dealings with His people which will reveal His nature and identity more clearly and profoundly than they had ever been revealed before. Professor Ernst Wendland offers this summary:

*“The full implications of this name, however, were still to be revealed.*

*What this name would mean as to how God would carry out His promise of redemption for His people, the Israelites would soon experience. God would now show 'His mighty hand' as the God of the covenant, the Lord of grace and mercy, the God who now would show His 'remembrance' of His covenant by taking direct action into their affairs. What the fathers did not know about this 'Lord' the Israelites would see revealed before their very eyes!" (Ernst Wendland, p. 40)*



*“This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”  
Luther Bible Woodcut by Jost Amman*

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 aber die kirch an adā angefangt so hett sie ni-  
 cht stetig gewerdē. aber die heilige euāgelia  
 thū meldūg vō disēz gerechte vñ heilige mān  
 8 vō iugēt auf gerechtigkait zeliē vñ got ze  
 fōchre gelehret hat. des wāndl hirtlich was  
 vñ vō alle dingē got die erste opffer raichet.  
 vñ darūb sahe got auf sein opffer vñ im was  
 dz angenē. in beywesen seins bruders cayn 8  
 sahe dz vñ vor schād enstellet sich sein ange-  
 sicht vñ ward mit dē stachel des neyds ver-  
 legt. vñ tōtet seine brud. 8 hat erstlich die him-  
 lische stat gepawt vñ sichselbs als dē ersten  
 burger dar ein gesētz. als abel über. c. iar alt  
 gestorbe was do hat adā nach dē hundertste  
 iar seinen sun Seth.



**S**eth 8 drit sun ade ist geporn im anfang  
 des. c. xxx. iars ade. das ist im end des. c.  
 xxx. iars der werlt. vñ lebet. ix. xij. iar. diser  
 seth ist geporn im. iij. xxx. iar ade. aber moyses  
 hat auffgelassen die. c. iar dar inn adam den  
 abel bey ebzon bewainet. vñ vmb erwerbūg  
 des öls der barmherzigkait an das paradeys  
 gieng. in disēn zwayē erste sūnē des adās. als  
 in dem chaym vñ abel habē zwu stett iren  
 visprūg gehabt. als sand Augustinus sprucht.  
 zwu lieb habē zwu stet gemacht. nemlich die  
 lieb sein selbs ein irdische. bis zuwerfnehung  
 gottes. vñ die lieb gottes ein hilische bis zu  
 der verschmehūg sein selbs. die erst berāmbr  
 sich in usselbs. aber die ander in gott. die erst  
 sucht ir ere von den mēschen. die and 8 hat got  
 der ein zeūg des gewissens ist. für ir grōste  
 glori. in die ersten stat gehōrt Cayn als 8 erst  
 geporn. vñ 8 sie gepawt hat. in die andern gehōrt 8  
 and 8 geporn abel 8 hic als ein pilgram gewandert hat. dann er  
 was auß genad ein fürsehner burger in der hōhe.

**Linea cristi**

Adam



Seth / Delboia



Enos



Caynan



**C**ayn der erst sun ade vñ eue ist mit  
 seiner swester calmana geporn im  
 xv. iar ade in dem agter damasceno. diser  
 was 8 erst agferman vñ fast geitig vñ  
 fremb 8 seligkait 8 alleungedultigst. het  
 sinerzē dz sein gab von got verwoiffen  
 vñ seins bruders got angenē wardē dar  
 umb ward er auß neyd bewegt dz er  
 nē brud in einē agler fūret vñ tōtet. vmb  
 dz ist er von got gestrafft das er alle tag  
 seins lebens vmb swaiffig vñ flūchtig  
 auf der erden was. vñ als nro cayn mit  
 alter beswert was vñ yezeitē vñ dē  
 lawbreifich saße wardt er mit geschoff  
 ertōdet vō Lamech seine vreniglein der  
 vor alter plindt was. vñ vō einem kind  
 auf dz geiagd gefürd ward. vñ maynet  
 das Cayn ein wild thier wer.

**I**ch hab auch hiebey eingezogen vil  
 sachē. hendl vñ geschichte mancher  
 lay kōnig vñ vōclker. auch grofstattiger  
 werck vñ fürtreffenlicher person. 8 sich  
 auch die leter des gestirns laufs gepawt



Deborah

Abel

chen in iren beschreibungen von Adam  
 bis auf Alphonsum.

**E**nos 8 sun Seth ist geporn im. ij.  
 v. iar Seth. vñ im. iij. xxx. iar  
 der werlt. vñ lebet. ix. v. iar. diser Enos  
 fieng zuerst an den namē des herē an ze  
 rēssen. vñleichte durch ertliche betliche  
 wort die er funde.

**C**aynan 8 sun enos ist geporn in. xc.  
 iar seins vaters. vñ nach densē. lxx.  
 auslegern. im. v. xxx. iar der werlt. vñ  
 lebet. ix. r. iar.

**I**n der linien 8 gerechte sind drey mit  
 himlischen gabē gezier. nēlich enos  
 8 den namen gottes anrūffet. Enoch 8  
 mit got wandert vñ in das paradeys  
 kam. vñ noe der in seinē geslechten vol  
 komē was vñ das menschlich geslecht  
 vō der sintflus behielt. Itē in 8 linien 8  
 sūnder sind auch drey mit irdischen din-  
 gē begabet. der ein tabel 8 was ein vater  
 der hirtē. vñ 8 die in dē gezeltē wonetē  
 der ander Jubal ein vater 8 singendē in  
 der harpsen vñ orgeln. der drit Tubalca  
 yn ein maister des hamers in alle werck  
 der metall.

"The Genealogy of Adam" from the "Nuremberg Chronicle" by H. Schedel - 1496

# Genesis Chapter 5

## *The Family History of Adam*

### *Introduction*

The occurrence of the key phrase “this is the written account” (Hebrew - “*toledoth*”) in the opening verse of Chapter 5 signals the beginning of another of the basic segments of the book of Genesis (cf. notes of 2:4). Luther provides an outstanding summary of both the content and the continuity of the text as he emphasizes the strongly messianic character of this narrative:

*“The burden of the first four chapters is that we should believe that after this life there is a resurrection of the dead and eternal life through the Seed of the woman. This is the lot of the godly and of those who believe, who in this present life endure hardships and are exposed to violence at the hands of all men. To the ungodly, on the other hand, are given the riches and the power of the world, of which they make use against the true church. In the first chapter it is pointed out that man was created for immortality, inasmuch as he was created according to the image of God (1:27). The command in the second chapter (2:17), ‘On whatever day you eat from this tree you will surely die,’ points out the same fact. It follows that the first human beings would not have died if they had not eaten. Through their sin, therefore, they fell from a state of immortality into a state of mortality; and out of their bodies they beget descendants who are like themselves. But in the third chapter immortality is restored through the promise of the Seed (3:15). In the fourth there is a clear example of immortality; for after Abel has been slain by his brother, he lives, after being received into the bosom of God, who bears witness that his blood is crying. Furthermore, the fifth chapter, which now follows, is written chiefly because of Enoch, who was taken by the Lord. Even though there is a need for it because of the number of years of the generation of the godly, nevertheless the most striking feature of it is that it relates that Enoch did not die like Adam, was not killed like Abel, and was not seized or torn to pieces by lions or bears, but that he was taken by the Lord Himself to immortality. This is to cause us to believe in the woman’s Seed, Christ, our Redeemer and the Victor over the devil, and through Him to look for everlasting life after this troubled and mortal*

*life. The Jews do not see the harmony among these five chapters. For they lack the Sun which throws light upon these matters and makes them clear; Christ, through whom we have forgiveness of sins and everlasting life...This chapter further presents us with a likeness, as it were, and an outline of the entire primitive world. For up to the time of the Flood ten patriarchs, together with their descendants who belong to the lineage of Christ are enumerated...Cain, too, has his line of descendants, as Moses has shown in the previous chapter; and there is not doubt in my mind that he had a far more numerous posterity than the righteous Seth. From these two families, as from roots, the earth was filled up to the time of the Flood by the branches that developed on both sides...He (Moses) wants us to reflect on the magnificence and superlative grandeur of that age. Adam outlived his nephew Enoch and died not long before Noah was born...This is the greatest glory of the primitive world, that it had so many good, wise, and holy men at the same time. We must not think that these are ordinary names of plain people; but, next to Christ and John the Baptist, they were the most outstanding heroes this world has ever produced. And on the last day we shall behold and admire their grandeur. Likewise, we shall also see their deeds. For then it will be manifest what Adam, Seth, Methuselah, and the others did; what they endured from the old serpent; how they comforted and maintained themselves by means of the hope of the Seed against the outrages of the world or of the Cainites; how they experienced various kinds of treachery; how much envy, hatred, and contempt they endured on account of the glory of the blessed Seed who would be born from their descendants. No one must think that they lived without the severest afflictions and endless crosses. These facts will be made manifest on the last day. Now it is something useful and delightful to view with our mind, as though with our eyes, that most happy age when so many patriarchs were living at the same time, almost all of whom, with the exception of Noah, saw Adam, their first parent.” (Luther, AE, 1, p. 330f.)*

### **Verses 1-2**

***This is the written account of Adam’s line. When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created He called them “man.”***

***“This is the written account of Adam’s line.”*** - The introductory formula indicates, as previously noted, that a new section of Genesis begins here. This section will continue until the next occurrence of the phrase in 6:9 where the family history of Noah begins. The genealogy of Adam included in this segment serves as the bridge to the account of the world Flood which will follow. Kenneth Matthews notes that the inspired author used this family history to convey four basic theological truths about humanity. These themes clearly focus on the fundamental Biblical truths of Law and Gospel.

*“(1) It presents a convincing case for the interconnectedness of all mankind and the hope for universal blessing, since the genealogy takes us from the beginnings to the diluvian world of Noah. (2) It demonstrates the results of Adam’s sin and despite this harsh reality, the continuation of God’s promise of preservation through the gift of procreation. (3) It contributes to the unfolding motif of conflict as anticipated in 3:15 where there is rivalry between an unrighteous offspring and a righteous lineage reflected by the genealogies of chapters 4 and 5 as well as 6:1-8, which contrasts Noah with his generation. (4) It shows the evolution and universality of human wickedness, which deserves God’s angry reprisal, but again, despite this, the hope that rests in God’s favor toward Noah.”* (Mathews, p. 295-296)

The so-called *“toledoth”* formula is used ten times in Genesis but this is the only instance in which specific reference is made to a written document. The Hebrew text actually refers to a *“book”* (*“sepher”*), a term which can refer to anything from a legal contract or deed (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1; Jeremiah 32:12) to a written document of some length (cf. Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Thus the term includes any written document, long or short, which is complete in and of itself. Here, the word refers to this segment of Genesis (5:1-6:9) and may well be an allusion to the original cuneiform clay tablet, the ancient written document which Moses used as his source for this information. If so, then the *Book of Adam’s Family History* is the oldest written document in all of the long story of humanity.

***“When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them ‘man’.”*** - Each of the family histories of Genesis begins with a description of the birth of its patriarch. Thus the story of Adam's line opens with a recapitulation of his



*“The Generations of Adam” by Hans Sebald Beham*

*Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.*

*“When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.”* - The text effectively presents the grim contrast between Adam, created in the image and after the likeness of God, and Seth, born not in God's image and likeness, but in the image and likeness of his sinful father Adam. The Fall comes between the creation of Adam and the birth of Seth. When Adam and Eve fell into sin the image of God was lost (cf. Excursus on Original Sin). Now every naturally born human being is born in sin. The text emphasizes the parallel by deliberately using the same *“image”* and *“likeness”* language in reference to the birth

creation in God's image. This brief review serves to recall the glorious original state of the first man and the glorious destiny for which he was created by God. This, of course, stands in glaring contrast to the sinful devastation about to be described. Each of the basic themes of Genesis 1 and 2 are repeated: creation in the divine image; the constitution of the race as male and female; and, the divine blessing which rested upon them. Moses adds one detail not previously provided; “He called them man.” As each of the patriarchs who follow receive their names from their fathers, so humanity receives its name the Creator God who is our Father.

### *Verses 3-5*

*When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.*



of Seth. Luther asserts the importance of the text's distinction between the God's image in Adam and Adam's image in Seth. The similarity between Adam and his son was infinitely more profound than mere outward physical appearance. Seth was truly his father's son in every way. Luther explains:

*“The simple meaning, however, is this: Adam was created after the image and similitude of God, or the image was created by God and not begotten; for he did not have parents. He did not remain in this image, but fell away from it through sin. And so Seth, who is born later on, is not born after the image of God but the image of his father Adam, not only in the shape of his face, but also in likeness. He not only has fingers, nose, eyes, bearing, voice, and speech like his father but is also like him in the remaining qualities both of mind and of body, in manners, character, will, etc. In respect to these, Seth does not reflect the likeness of God, which Adam had lost, but the likeness of his father Adam. But this is a likeness and image which was not created by God, but was begotten from Adam. This image includes original sin and the punishment of eternal death which was inflicted on Adam on account of his sin.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 1, pp. 339-340)

The three step pattern which Moses used in describing the patriarchs from Adam to Noah is established here. We are told, first of all, how old the patriarch was when he fathered the next named link in the Messianic line. He then tells us how long the rest of the patriarch's life lasted, and finally provides his total life span. This formula was characteristic of genealogical tables in ancient documents of the Near East. The genealogy is “*linear*,” that is, it provides only one descendant for each successive generation. This approach is in contrast to a “*segmented*” genealogy which lists every member of each generation. In this context, the linear approach is most appropriate since the author's purpose is to trace the continuation of the Messianic promise throughout the generations. The debate over whether this genealogy is “*closed*,” that is, complete and all inclusive, listing each successive generation without omission or exception, or “*open*,” that is, listing only those individuals whose lives were significant or meaningful in the unfolding of the family's history, will be discussed in detail in the following section.

***“After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.”*** - The rabbis tell us that before



*“The Family of Adam” by Hartmann Schedel - 1496*

Eve died, she had borne Adam thirty pairs of twins, a son and a daughter each time, as the result of marital rites conducted in the utmost holiness and decorum. Sacred Scripture, of course, provides no such titillating detail. The sole purpose of this family history is to trace the messianic line. The descendants here listed are not necessarily the first born. Nor are they their parents’ only children. Their significance lies exclusively in the fact that they are all ancestors of the Messiah, Jesus. (cf. Luke 3:35-37)

Moses reports that Adam lived to be 930 years old. The longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs has been a topic of widespread discussion. Some have attempted to evade the issue by suggesting that the “years” here listed were much shorter periods of only

a few months or that the names cited are not of individuals but rather represent families or tribal groups. None of these suggestions can be justified on the basis of the text. Bible critics feel free to dismiss these figures as merely another example of mythic exaggeration. Parallels are drawn to the king lists of the ancient Sumerians which report reigns of up to 64,000 years per monarch! Such fanciful tales bear little similarity to Scripture's sober recitation of the facts. The Biblical record indicates that man was created for immortality. Death came upon humanity as the result of Adam's Fall. The descending scale for life spans in the Old Testament is roughly 1000-800 years (Adam - Lamech); 600 to 200 years (Noah to Abraham); 200-100 years (Abraham -Moses); 70-80 years (Moses to the present, cf. Psalm 90:10). A number of factors come into play in understanding this steady decline in life expectancy. The temporal consequences of sin made their impact felt only gradually. Disease, the degeneration of aging, and genetic mutation slowly tightened their fatal grip upon humanity. *"Even under the curse of sin man's constitution displayed such vitality that it did not at first submit to the ravages of time until after many centuries had passed."* (Leupold) It would also seem that prior to the devastation of the flood the natural environment was much more hospitable to extended human life (cf. notes on 1:6-8). After the flood, the typical life span quickly declines.

Like the tolling of a funeral bell the report of each patriarch (with the singular exception of Enoch) ends with the grim phrase ***"and then he died"***. In generation after generation the icy hand of death touches each of the descendants of Adam, but not before they had passed on the gift of life and the promise of the Messiah.

### ***Verses 6-20***

When Seth had lived 105 years he became the father of Enosh. And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died. When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died. When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died. When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died. When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared

lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died. When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah, and said, “He will comfort us in the labor and toil of our hands, caused by the ground the Lord had cursed.” After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died. After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**“When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh...”** - The meaning of the names listed is, in many cases, somewhat obscure, but may be roughly translated as follows:

- Seth.....“Substitute”
- Enosh.....“Mortal Frailty”
- Kenan.....“I Have Him!”
- Mahalalel.....“Praise of God”
- Jared.....“Courageous”
- Enoch.....“Dedication”
- Methuselah.....“Man of the Spear”
- Lamech.....“Conqueror”
- Noah.....“Rest.”



**“The Family of Enosh” by Hans Sebald Beham**

The genealogy, like its counterpart in chapter 11, includes ten generations. In Hebrew

numerology, ten is one of the perfect numbers, signifying the perfection of divine order. It implies completeness, marking the entire round of anything; an indication that nothing is lacking. In his classic study *Number in Scripture*, E.W. Bullinger lists these perfect “10’s”: the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20); the 10 Plagues (Exodus 9:14); the tithe; the ten kingdoms of the Antichrist (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,12); Israel’s ten rebellions in the wilderness (Numbers 14:22); and, the 10 Canaanite nations in the Land of Promise (Genesis 15:19).

Conservative commentators disagree on the nature of this genealogy. Some insist that it presents a “*perfectly natural and straight-forward account*” offering a reliable chronological framework for the history of the antediluvian world, indicating that 1,656 years passed between creation and the Flood. Archbishop Ussher based his careful calculation that creation took place in the year 4004 B.C. on the same assumption. The much maligned Anglican prelate simply totaled up all of the generations listed to count back to the point at which time began. If we assume that the genealogy is complete, a continuous record of every generation, then the information presented in this genealogy may be summarized as follows:

<i>Patriarch</i>	<i>Year of Birth</i>	<i>Age at Birth of Next Patriarch</i>	<i>Year of Death</i>
<i>Adam</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>930</i>
<i>Seth</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>1042</i>
<i>Enosh</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>1140</i>
<i>Kenan</i>	<i>325</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1235</i>
<i>Mahalalel</i>	<i>395</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>1290</i>
<i>Jared</i>	<i>460</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>1422</i>
<i>Enoch</i>	<i>622</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>987*</i>
<i>Methuselah</i>	<i>687</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>1656**</i>
<i>Lamech</i>	<i>874</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>1651</i>
<i>Noah</i>	<i>1056</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>2006</i>

*\*Enoch did not die but was taken away by God.*  
*\*\*Methuselah died in the year that the flood came.*

Given the accuracy of this scenario, then, as Luther suggests, a great deal of overlap

would have occurred among the lives of the patriarchs. Adam would have lived until Lamech, the father of Noah, was 56 years old, and Noah himself would have been born only 14 years after the death of Seth.



“The Family of Kenan” by Hans Sebald Beham

Other scholars, equally committed to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, argue that this view misunderstands the function of genealogies in the Biblical world. John C. Whitcomb lists the following arguments against the “*strict chronology*” interpretation of Genesis chapters 5 and 11 (cf. *The Genesis Flood*, John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, pp. 474ff.):

(1.) The number of years in the genealogies are not totalled as they would have been if the author's purpose was to indicate the time span of the whole period. Elsewhere, when this is the intent, the total number of years is clearly indicated (i.e. the length of the sojourn in Egypt - Exodus 12:40; or the period from the Exodus to the construction of the temple - 1 Kings 6:1). The absence of a total in these genealogies should indicate that the author has other things in mind.

(2.) The parallel genealogy in Luke (Luke 3:23-37) includes an additional name which is not a part of the Genesis text (Cainan - Luke 3:36 - compare Genesis 11:12). If

these genealogies are complete and inclusive, then one of them must be in error. The

inclusion of Cainan in Luke's list suggests the possibility that the Genesis genealogies were not intended to be complete.

(3.) The perfect numerological symmetry between the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 (10 generations in each) may indicate that chronological accuracy was not the author's basic concern. A close parallel can be observed in Matthew's genealogy of Christ through Joseph (Matthew 1:1-17), and Luke's through Mary (Luke 3:23-28). In each case the list of names has been telescoped with obvious chronological omissions in order to achieve the desired numerological result. The NIV Study Bible offers the following helpful summary of the role of genealogies in Scripture:

*“Analysis of genealogies, both inside and outside the Bible, has disclosed that they serve a variety of functions (with different principles governing the lists), that they vary in form (some being segmented, and others linear) and depth (the number of generations listed), and that they are often fluid (subject to change). There are three general areas in which genealogies function: the familial or domestic, the legal-political, and the religious...As to form, some genealogical lists trace several lines of descent (segmented genealogies) while others are devoted to a single line (linear genealogies). Comparison of the some genealogical lists of the same tribal or family line often brings to light surprising differences. This fluidity of the lists may reflect variation in function...The most common type of fluidity in Biblical materials is telescoping, the omission of names from the list. Unimportant names are left out in order to more directly relate an individual to a prominent ancestor, or possibly to achieve the desired number of names in the genealogy. Some Biblical genealogies, for example, omit names to achieve multiples of 7: for the period from David to the Exile Matthew gives 14 generations (2x7) while Luke gives 21 (3x7), and the same authors give similar multiples of 7 for the period from the Exile to Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-28).”*  
(NIV Study Bible, p.581)

(4.) The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 include information which is irrelevant to a strict chronology. The additional facts provided about each of the patriarch's other children and subsequent death indicate that the purpose of these genealogies was more than simply chronological. Their major purposes included the following: to show us how faithfully God guarded the messianic line, fulfilling the promise of Genesis 3:15; to impress upon us the vigor and grandeur of humanity in those days of the world's

prime; to demonstrate the fulfillment of the curse of Genesis 2:17; and to demonstrate the tightening grip of sin's mortal consequences after the flood.

(5.) Such terms as “*became the father of*” and “*the son of*” which in English imply a direct father - son relationship, sometimes have a much wider connotation in Biblical Hebrew. In this broader sense these terms are used to indicate ancestral descent without restriction to immediate offspring (cf. Matthew 1:1,8; 1 Chronicles 26:24). If this is the case in Genesis 5, then the purpose for listing the year in which each birth occurred was to demonstrate the vigor and vitality of mankind during this period, and not to establish immediate descent. Thus, for example, when verse 15 says: “*When Mahalalel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared...*” - given the usage of Biblical Hebrew, this statement is equally true whether Jared is an immediate or remote descendant of Mahalalel; whether Jared himself was born in Mahalalel’s sixty-fifth year, or one was born in that year from whom Jared would some day be descended.

6. A “strict chronology” view of Genesis 11 compels the conclusion that all of the post-diluvian patriarchs, including Noah would still have been alive when Abraham was fifty years old, and that, in fact, three of them, Shem, Selah, and Eber not only outlived Abraham but survived well into the lifetime of Jacob. It is difficult to reconcile this view with the Biblical assertion that Abraham's “fathers” were idolaters (Joshua 24:2,14,15). Furthermore, Scripture presents Abraham’s departure from Mesopotamia as the abandonment of an ancient



“The Family of Enoch” by Hans Sebald Beham



and well-developed civilization, and goes on to describe his wanderings through Egypt and the various Canaanite realms. The definite impression is given that all of these cultures were well established and had flourished for many centuries when Abraham arrived on the scene. Yet, if Genesis 11 lists every consecutive generation, Abraham was born less than 300 years after the flood and only a few decades after the dispersion which followed the Tower of Babel.

There is considerable evidence that would lead one to question the validity of the strict chronology interpretation within the Biblical text itself. However, even if we admit that the strict chronology interpretation of these chapters is not required and allow for the possibility of “gaps” in the genealogies a vast difference remains between the Bible’s view of the scope of human history and that of Darwinian evolution. If there are missing generations in the family histories, they represent the possibility of inserting a few hundred, or at most, a few thousand years into the total time span. The hundreds of thousands and millions of years required by evolutionists simply cannot be reconciled the Biblical sequence of events.

The text deviates from the standard genealogical pattern in reference to two significant individuals, Enoch and Noah.

***“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”*** - In the seventh generation from Adam a character appears who commands special attention. This had also been true in the family line of Cain where the seventh son, boastful, bloodthirsty Lamech had exemplified sin's degenerative effects (cf. 4:19-22). Enoch personifies the complete consecration to God characteristic of the Sethite line. Enoch ***“walked with God”*** and was a prophet of God. The New Testament letter of Jude reports Enoch’s thundering denunciation of man’s wickedness and triumphant announcement of the impending judgement of God. ***“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken***



*“The Translation of Enoch” by Gerhardt Hoet*

*against Him.”* (Jude 14,15) Luther describes Enoch as “*a sun above all the teachers or patriarchs of the primitive world*” and commends his “*outstanding courage and boldness*” in confessing the Seed of the Woman and resisting Satan and the Cainite church. (Martin Luther, AE, 1,p.344) The key phrase, “*walked with God*”, is used twice to emphasize a life of piety and special intimacy with the Lord. It will occur again in Genesis 6:9 in reference to Noah. Malachi repeats and defines the phrase in the last book of the Old Testament as he describes the ideal levitical priest: “*True*

*instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.”* (Malachi 2:6) Enoch lived on earth for 365 years, the shortest life span of any of the ante-diluvian patriarchs. But this remarkable man of God never died! **“He was no more, because God took him away.”** In the New Testament's great roll call of the heroes of faith, the writer to the Hebrews reports: **“By faith, Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”** (Hebrews 11:5,6) Enoch was a fascinating figure to the Jews. No less than three books in the Old Testament Apocrypha are attributed to him. He has remained an inspiring example to believers of every age. The popular hymn *“Chief of Sinners Though I Be”* says it well indeed.



*“The Family of Noah” - Hans Sebald Beham*

*“Jesus only can impart balm to heal the smitten heart;  
Peace that flows from sin forgiven, joy that lifts the soul to heaven;  
Faith and hope to walk with God in the way that Enoch trod.”*  
(TLH # 342)

***“When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah and said, ‘He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed.’ After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died. After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japeth.”*** - Moses indicates the unique significance of the birth of this child through a series of changes in the genealogical formula. Special attention is given to the name bestowed upon the son of Lamech. The boy is named ***“Noah”*** which means *“rest”* or *“relief”* in Hebrew. Lamech apparently sensed that in an unusual way God would use his son to bless the human race. Luther speculates that having seen Enoch translated to glory, Lamech and his contemporaries came to believe that the happy day of the fulfillment of the promise was now at hand. This pious father fervently hoped that his son would be the promised Descendant of the women who would bring about the restoration of the world and remove the curse of sin. The text’s specific reference is to God’s curse of the ground in Genesis 3:17, as He speaks to Adam in the aftermath of the Fall.

The genealogy concludes with the three sons of Noah. This also represents a change in the typical pattern. Until now, only the son within the Messianic line has been mentioned. Now the concern is with all three sons, setting the stage for the Flood narrative about to follow. The text also fails to mention other sons and daughters as in the case of the other patriarchs, although the birth of the three sons mentioned comes much later in life, at age 500. This does not necessarily mean that Noah had no other children, but simply be an indication that these were the only three of Noah’s children to survive the Flood. The typical genealogical formula only resumes in Genesis 9:28,29 where we are told: ***“After the flood Noah lived 350 years. Altogether Noah lived 950 years and then he died.”*** *“The effect of this division of Noah’s biographical material is to present the flood story as an expansion of the biographical narrative and thus an expansion of the Sethite genealogy itself.”* (Wilson)



*"The Birth of Noah" by James Tissot*

## **Genesis Chapter 6**

### ***The World Before the Flood***

#### ***Introduction***

*"In the first five chapters Moses had described the human family as it was in the original world, and has set before our eyes the marvelous grandeur of the holy patriarchs who ruled the primitive world. In these five chapters, as in a first book, he sums up the story of the happiest portion of the entire human race and of the original world before the flood. At this point we shall begin the second book of Genesis, which contains the story of the Flood and points out that all the descendants of Cain were destroyed, but that the family of the righteous endures through the ages. For when everything was perishing by the Flood, the family of the righteous was nevertheless preserved like an everlasting world. But it is appalling for the entire human race to be destroyed down to eight souls, even though the age was a truly golden one. Later generations have never matched the excellence, the magnificence, and the splendor of the original world. And yet, what God had created as*

*most excellent and most outstanding among the human race He destroyed, for the sake of frightening us thoroughly, as it should be. Nevertheless, even in this punishment God remained consistent...It is the characteristic and continuing work of God that He condemns the most eminent, casts down the most powerful, and shakes the most brave, even though they are His creatures. But He does this to frighten the ungodly and to awaken us with many awe inspiring examples of His wrath, that we may learn to despair of ourselves and to put our trust in His grace alone. Therefore, either men must live under the shadow of God's wings and with trust in His mercy, or they must perish.” (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p.3)*

### **Verses 1 -2**

***When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.***

***“When men began to increase in number on the earth ...”*** - This introductory phrase links that which follows with the preceding chapter. The widespread proliferation of humanity forms the background for the events to be described. The terminology of the phrase reminds us of God's original command to ***“be fruitful and multiply”*** (Genesis 1:28) and the elemental link between man, who was formed from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7) and the earth. ***“Men”*** (Hebrew - *“ha adam”*) is generic in this context. It does not refer merely to males but to mankind in general. The genealogies in Chapter 5 had emphasized the male descendants. Here, in contrast, the ***“daughters”*** are highlighted. In the Hebrew text, contrary to ordinary Hebrew word order, the subject ***“daughters”*** is placed before the verb for additional emphasis. The emphasis serves to set the stage for the phrase which follows in which the ***“daughters of men”*** play a critical role.

***“The sons of god saw that the daughters of men were beautiful ...”*** This text is regarded by Bible scholars as one of the most difficult and obscure passages in Holy Scripture. It has been the subject of longstanding controversy. Kenneth Matthews admits: *“The identity of the sons of god continues to humble the expositor.”* (Matthews, p. 332) The significance of the incident in the overall narrative of the chapter is clear. Something occurred which contributed in a fundamental way to the

corruption and moral degradation of the human race, thus necessitating God's judgment upon humanity in the Flood. The nature of the occurrence depends on the identity of the enigmatic **"sons of god"** (Hebrew - *"bene ha elohim"*) and **"daughters of men"** (Hebrew *"benoth ha adam"*). Historically, two major views have been advanced: (1) that the sons of god are fallen angels who take on physical form and procreate with human women; and, (2) that the sons of god are Sethite men who intermarry with the daughters of men who are Cainite women. Neither of the two understandings is without its difficulties.



*"Fallen Angels on the Wing" by Gustav Doré*

The first view, that the sons of god are fallen angels who procreate with human women, enjoys the benefit of historical precedence.

This was the view of Judaism in the Biblical era, reflected in the Septuagint and the Jewish Apocrypha, and that of the overwhelming majority of the fathers of the early Christian Church, based on the New Testament allusions of 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6-7. In the modern era, liberal Bible critics, intent upon discrediting the Bible as the inspired, inerrant Word of God, have gleefully utilized this text as a classic example of what they consider Scripture's uncritical adoption of pagan myths and fairy tales. Modern conservative commentators, in re-action to these attacks, have often discounted the angel theory because of their reluctance to provide additional grist for the Bible critics mills. Dr. Sydney Page warns conservatives not to allow their admirable desire to maintain a high view of Scripture to prejudice honest exegesis which deals with the Biblical text on its own terms:

*"It is dangerous to speculate about what motivates interpreters, but it is*

*possible that evangelical scholars are drawn to interpretations other than the angel view, partly because it is difficult to accept that angels actually intermarried with human women. Those who have a low view of the historical reliability of the Bible have no trouble acknowledging the presence of such a story in the Old Testament, but those who regard the Bible as divine revelation may be less favorably disposed towards this because they have difficulty believing that such an unusual event really happened. In this case, an evangelical commitment to the truthfulness of Scripture may be a hindrance to honest exegesis.” (Page, p. 51)*

The second view, that the sons of god are Sethite men who intermarry with Cainite women, was advocated by St. Augustine, whose immense influence led to its adoption by the majority of western theologians during the Middle Ages. John Milton describes the intermarriage and its consequences in his classic *“Paradise Lost.”* Near the end of his epic, Milton depicts a tour of the future accorded to Adam by the archangel Michael, which reveals the downfall of the sons of god ensnared by the beauty of the daughters of men:

*“Judge not what is best by pleasure, though to nature seeming meet,  
Created, as thou art to nobler end, holy and pure, conformity divine.  
Those tents thou sawest so pleasant, were the tents  
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his race who slew his brother;  
Studious they appear of arts that polish life, inventors rare, unmindful of their  
Maker,  
Though His Spirit taught them, but they His gifts acknowledged none.  
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;  
For that fair female troop thou sawest that seemed of goddesses,  
So blithe, so smooth, so gay,  
Yet empty of all good wherein consists woman's domestic honor and chief praise;  
Bred onely and competed to the taste of lustful appetite,  
To sing, to dance, to dress, and trouble the tongue, and rule the eye.  
To these that sober race of men, whose lives religious titled them the Sons of God,  
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame ignobly  
To the traines and to the smiles of these fair atheists  
And now to swim in joy, (ere long to swim at large) and laugh;  
For which the world, ere long a world of tears must weepe.*



The scene which follows discloses a world shattered by warfare and destruction, dominated by mighty warriors who are “*Death’s ministers, not men, who thus deal death inhumanly to men and multiply ten thousand fold the sin of him who slew his brother.*” Michael explains the identity of these cruel champions:

*“These are the product of those ill-mated marriages thou sawest;  
Where good and bad were matcht, who of themselves abhor to join;  
And by imprudence mixt, produce prodigious births of body or mind.  
Such were these giants, men of high renown;  
For in those days mighty ones shall be admired,  
And valor and heroic virtue called; to overcome in battle,  
And subdue nations and bring home spoils with infinite man slaughter,  
Shall be held the highest pitch of human glory,  
And for glory done of triumph to be styled great conquerors  
Patrons of mankind, gods and sons of gods, destroyers rightly called and plagues  
of men. (Milton, pp. 309ff.)*



*“The Incubus” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving*

This was also the view of Martin Luther and the reformers, although it is interesting to note that Luther did not personally reject the possibility of evil angels assuming physical form for the purpose of tempting human beings to sexual sin in the form of an “*incubus*” (male) or “*succubus*” (female). Luther opines: “*As far as incubi and succubi are concerned, I do not deny, but believe, that the devil may happen to be either a succubus or an incubus; for I*

*have heard many relate their very own experiences.*” (Martin Luther, 2, p. 11) Luther, however, was skeptical that such intercourse between men and angels could actually result in the conception of children.

The preponderance of textual and historical evidence seems to support the angelic interpretation, modern difficulties with the supernatural notwithstanding. The evidence in support of this somewhat startling view is both textual and historical.

The most basic way in which the specific meaning of Biblical words is determined is by careful examination of their use elsewhere in Scripture. As the Biblical texts are compared the clear passages are then used to explain the define passages which may be less clear. The Hebrew phrase *“bene ha elolim”* is used three other times in the Old Testament, all the Book of Job. In this regard, it is significant to note that the historical context of Job is the early patriarchal period. It is indisputably clear in all three of the Job references that the *“sons of god”* are angels and, in fact the word is translated as *“angels”* in the NIV text. The three texts are Job 1:6; 2:1; and 38:6-7.

***“One day, the sons of god came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came with them.”*** (Job 1:6)

***“On another day, the sons of god came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came with them to present himself before the Lord.”*** (Job 2:1)

***“On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of god shouted for joy?”***  
(Job 38:6-7)

Daniel 3:25 uses the very similar Hebrew phrase *“bar elohim”* to describe the fourth figure seen by the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar in the fiery furnace: ***“He said, ‘Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods!’”*** Another close parallel which clearly refers to angels is found in Psalm 89:6-7. The Psalmist asserts the unique authority and power of God in contrast to the heavenly host of angels which surrounds Him. Among the designations of the angels in the Psalm is the Hebrew phrase *“bene elim”* - ***“the sons of god.”***

***“For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the sons of god (Hebrew - “bene elim”)? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared. He is more awesome than all who surround Him.”***



***“Fallen Angels in Hell” by Andrea di Bonaiuto***

This understanding of the Hebrew text is also clearly reflected in the “*Septuagint*,” the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible completed during the intertestamental period. The rabbis who prepared the “*Septuagint*” translate the Hebrew words “*bene ha elohim*” into Greek as “*angeloi tou theou*” which means “*angels of God.*”

This view is also reflected in the first century Jewish Apocryphal book of I Enoch. I Enoch provides a rather detailed description of these events. The book was written during the first century B.C. and enjoyed widespread popularity both within Judaism and the early Christian Church.

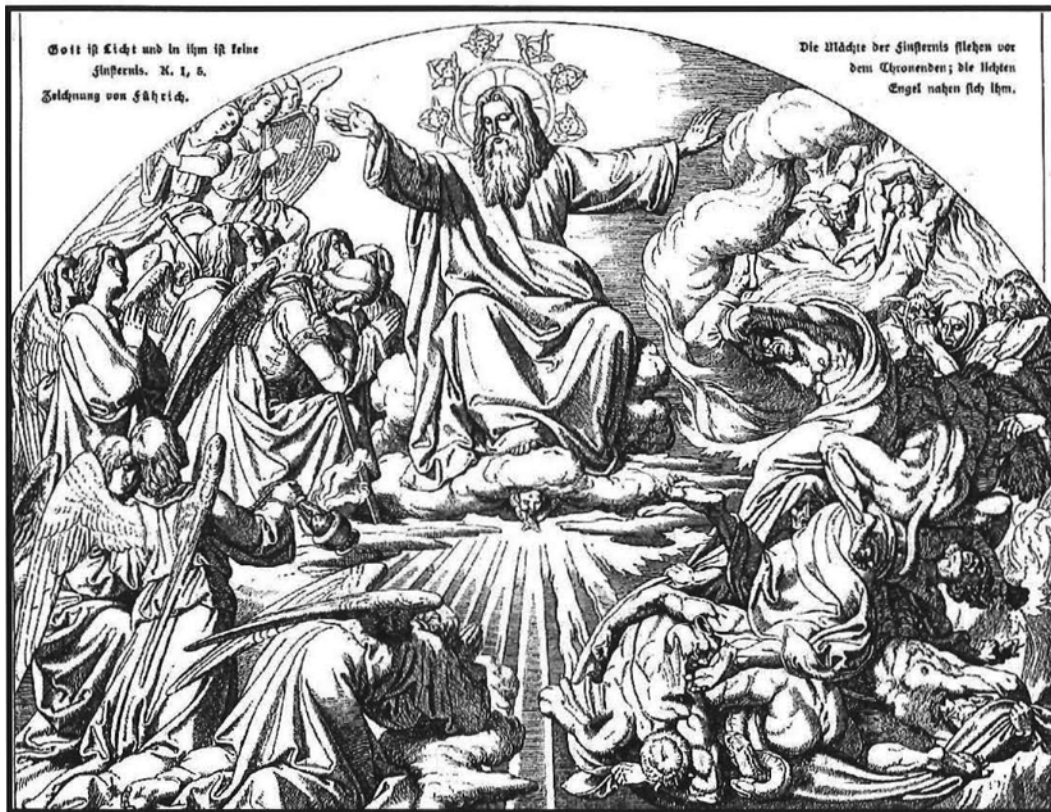
*“In those days, when the children of man had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome and beautiful daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw them and desired them; and they said to one another, ‘Come, let us choose wives for ourselves among the daughters of man and beget us children’... And they were altogether two hundred; and they descended...And they took wives unto themselves, and everyone chose one woman for himself, and they began to go unto them and they taught them magic and incantations....And the women became pregnant and gave birth to great giants... And now, holy ones of heaven, the souls of people are putting their case before you pleading, ‘Bring our judgment before the Most High...You see what Azazel has done, how he has taught all forms of oppression upon the earth... and they lay together with them – with those women – and defiled themselves and revealed to*

*them every kind of sin. As for the women, they gave birth to giants to the degree that the whole earth was filled with blood and oppression'... And to Michael God said, 'Make known to Semyaza and the others who are with him, who fornicated with the women, that they will die together with them in all their defilement. And when they and all their children have battled with each other, and when they have seen the destruction of all their beloved ones, bind them for seventy generations underneath the rocks of the ground until the day of their judgment of their consummation, until the eternal judgment is concluded. In those days they will lead them into the bottom of the fire and in torment – in the prison where they will be locked up forever.' (I Enoch 6:1-9; 9:1-13)*

The apocryphal book of “*Jubilees*,” written in the same time frame, echoes this view. Our earliest texts of this fascinating work were found among the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

*“And when the children of men began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, then the angels of the Lord saw in that year of jubilee that they were good to look at. And they took wives for themselves from all those whom they chose. And they bore children for them; and they were the giants. And injustice increased upon the earth, and all flesh corrupted its way; man and cattle and beasts and birds and everything which walks upon the earth. And they all corrupted their way and their ordinances, and they began to eat one another. And injustice grew upon the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all mankind was thus continually evil...And against His angels whom He had sent to the earth He was very angry. He commanded that they be uprooted from all their dominion. And He told us to bind them in the depths of the earth forever, until the day of the great judgment in order for the judgment to be executed upon all those who corrupted their ways and their deeds before the Lord. And He wiped out every one of their places and not one of them remained whom He did not judge according to their wickedness.” (Jubilees 5:1-11)*

I Enoch and Jubilees are not part of the Biblical Canon and are not inspired. Nor is their interpretation of Genesis 6 divinely authoritative. These books are not inerrant and in some instances contain obvious inaccuracies. But this intriguing material does



***“The Evil Angels Flee from God’s Radiance as the Good Angels Worship Him”  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Luther Bible Engraving***

reflect opinions widely held among the people of God during the era in which the New Testament was written. It seems apparent that the apostle Peter was familiar with them and, in fact, alludes to them in his New Testament letters. The inspired apostle Jude actually quotes from I Enoch in reference to the venerable patriarch whose name was appropriated for this apocryphal book. In Jude 14-15 records this word of prophecy from Enoch:

***“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’”***

The words of Enoch cited by the apostle are a quotation from 1 Enoch 1:9.

In 2 Peter 2, the apostle uses God’s punishment of the angels and His destruction of the world in the great Flood as examples of the certainty of divine judgment upon sin. The apostle writes:

***“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Hell (Greek- “tartarus” - “the deepest depth of hell”), putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if He did not spare the ancient world when He brought the Flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others... if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”*** (2 Peter 2:4-5, 9)

Peter’s designation of Hell as “*tartarus*,” a Greek word for the lowest depth of the pits of Hell, is the only instance in the New Testament where this unusual term occurs. But while this term does not appear in the Bible it is used commonly in classical Greek to describe the most terrible punishments of Hades. At the same time, the apostle’s description of the “***gloomy dungeons***” where sinful angels are being held for judgment is very similar to the language of I Enoch 10. Note also the connection drawn in the Epistle between the punishment of these angels and the Flood. Lutheran commentator Bo Reicke observes:

*“Evidently the angels mentioned in vs. 4 are those described in Genesis 6:1-4, and in more detail in 1 Enoch. They fell into sin on account of earthly women and were regarded as having caused war, violence, idolatry, and witchcraft...They were cast from heaven into hell where they are kept in dark pits to be judged in due time (cf. 1 Enoch 10:4)”*  
(Reicke, p. 164)

The apostle uses the same kind of language in 1 Peter 3:19 - “***Through whom also He (Christ) went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago while God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.***” Reicke comments:

*“The undoubtedly refers to the angels mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4 who fell into sin and thus were responsible for the Flood. Probably the people who perished in the Flood are also numbered with these spirits. They were the descendants of the fallen angels, and in the story of Genesis 6 received the punishment meted out as a consequence of the sin of the angels with the daughters of men...Many vivid and imaginative stories of these sinful spirits at the time of the Flood circulated in late Judaism and early Christianity, picturing them as captives in the deepest*

*darkness. The books of Enoch contain gruesome descriptions of them and there are Christian traditions as well (cf 2 Peter 2:14). In all likelihood Peter was either directly or indirectly dependent on the picturesque descriptions contained in the Book of Enoch when he referred to the captive spirits from the days of the Flood. He took it for granted that his readers were familiar with the stories of the disobedient spirits. Otherwise he would hardly have made this passing allusion to them.” (Reicke, p. 109-110)*



*“The Fall of the Angels” by Gustav Doré*

The terminology used by Jude is virtually identical to that of 2 Peter and 1 Enoch - ***“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these He has kept in darkness, bound in everlasting chains for judgment on the great day.”*** (Jude 6) Given the fact that Jude quotes from 1 Enoch just a few verses later, it is impossible to deny the apostle’s familiarity with and dependence upon the earlier book. The language which follows strengthens the identification of the angels in verse 6 with the fallen angels of Genesis. After referring to the downfall of the angels, Jude goes on to describe the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He contends that the same sin led to God’s judgment

in both instances – ***“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”*** (Jude 7) The sin of the

angels and that of the Sodomites are linked in the text by the phrase ***“In a similar way.”*** The English text defines the sin of the Sodomites as having given ***“themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.”*** The Greek text is much more emphatic and specific. It literally reads – *“these practiced fornication and followed alien flesh”* (Greek - *“sarkos he teras”*). The Sodomites attempted the homosexual rape of the angels who had been sent to warn Lot and his family (Genesis 19:1-11). Thus Jude indicates that a particular kind of sexual sin, involving human beings and angels, was present in both instances.

The identification of the ***“sons of god”*** as fallen angels is also supported by the renown first century Jewish historian Josephus. In his *“Antiquities,”* a history of the Israelite nation since the dawn of time, Josephus writes: *“For seven generations those people continued believing in God as the Master of the Universe, but then they fell into vice and depravity. Some, born of angels who had consorted with women, resembled the audacious giants of Greek mythology.”* (Josephus, I, III, 28)

Among the Christian Church Fathers of the first few centuries, the conviction that the ***“sons of god”*** were fallen angels was nearly universal. For our purposes, a few brief examples must suffice. Justin Martyr, one of Christianity’s best known defenders in the first generation after the apostles, writes:

*“He committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment and were captivated by the love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings and partly by the fears and punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions; and among men they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness.”* (Justin Martyr, ANF, 1, p. 190)

Irenaeus of Lyon addresses the subject in his classic *“Against Heresies,”* written at the end of the Second Century:

*“Since the Son of God is always one and the same, He gives to those who believe in Him a well of water springing up to eternal life, but He causes the unfruitful fig tree immediately to dry up; and in the days of Noah He*



*justly brought on the Deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God, since the angels that sinned had commingled with them, and He acted as He did in order that He might put a check upon the sins of these men, but at the same time, He might preserve the archetype, the formation of Adam.”* (Irenaeus, ANF, 1, p. 516)

Tertullian of Carthage, the first of the early Fathers who wrote in Latin rather than Greek, refers to the angelic **“sons of god”** in his fifth book against the heretic Marcion, written early in the third century:

*“The apostle was quite aware that spiritual wickedness had been at work in heavenly places, where angels were entrapped into sin by the daughters of men...On proposition I lay down: that those angels, the deserters from God, the lovers of women, were likewise the discoverers of this curious art (astrology).”* (Tertullian, ANF, 3, p. 470f.)

In A.D. 177, Athenagorus, a Greek philosopher won over to Christianity while reading the Scriptures in order to refute them, wrote a plea to the Roman emperor for the legal toleration of the Christian religion. That plea included the following assertion:

*“For this is the office of angels, to exercise providence for God over the things created and ordered by Him... Just as with men, who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice, so it is among the angels. Some free agents, you will observe, as they were created by God, continued in those things for which God had made them and over which He had ordained them; but some outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them; namely, this ruler of matter and its various forms, and others of those who were placed about this first firmament; these fell into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh, and became negligent and wicked in the management of the things entrusted to them. Of these lovers of virgins, therefore, were begotten those who are called giants.”* (Athenagorus, ANF, 2, p. 142)

Those who reject this view, typically cite Matthew 22:30 as Biblical proof that angels are incapable of sexual activity and marriage. Our Lord declares: **“At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in**

*heaven*” (cf. also Mark 12:24-25; Luke 20:34-36). A careful reading of the text, however, reveals that Jesus does not rule out the possibility of sexual activity by angels. He merely describes the actual situation of the good angels in heaven. Henry Morris notes: *“When Jesus said that the angels of God in heaven do not marry, this does not necessarily mean that those who have been cast out of heaven were incapable of doing so.”* The incident of the attempted homosexual rape of Lot’s angelic visitors in Sodom seems to at least suggest the possibility of sexual activity between human beings and angels (cf. Genesis 19:1-22). In the same connection, it is significant to note that the demons whom Christ confronts and casts out in the New Testament are portrayed as longing to occupy and possess physical bodies, as, for example in the healing of the Gadarene demoniac (Luke 8:26-33). The same concept is expressed in Christ’s description of the nature of demonic activity:



*“The Gadarene Demoniac” 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Engraving*

*“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”* (Luke 11:24-26)

While we may not fully understand this yearning, it is, nonetheless, clearly indicated in the Biblical text. Given this Scriptural emphasis, it would seem perilous to preclude the possibility of sexual contact between fallen angels and human beings.

Anglican scholar, Gordon Wenham offers this helpful observation to those who find themselves uncomfortable with the concept that the “*sons of god*” are fallen angels:

*“If the modern reader finds this story incredible, that reflects a materialism that tends to doubt the existence of spirits, good or evil. But those who believe that the Creator could unite Himself to human nature in the Virgin’s womb will not find this story intrinsically beyond belief.”*  
(Wenham, p. 140)

The devil’s interest in this unique incident is not difficult to understand. The deliverance of humanity had been promised through the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15). Like Eve, Satan may well have feared that Cain, the first offspring of the woman, was the promised Deliverer. The Tempter succeeded in corrupting Cain’s heart with jealousy and rage, turning him into a foul murderer. But the line of the godly through whom the Deliverer would be born, continued on through Seth. Satan then conceived a plan to corrupt the entire race by the intermarriage of his fallen angels and human beings. This was a direct assault on God’s promised salvation through the Seed of the woman. The enemy’s intent was to infect and pollute the woman’s seed by defying the Creator’s command that every species reproduce only “*according to its own kind.*” (Genesis 1:24)

In “*Hamlet*,” William Shakespeare reminds us that “*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*” (“*Hamlet*,” I, v, 166). That humbling reminder is always salutary. This perplexing story can serve to teach us once again about the limitations of our own comfortable world views. There are greater forces at work in human history than mere men and women. The ancient battle between good and evil that has characterized our entire history is also reflected in the warfare of angelic hosts in realms which far exceed the limits of our comprehension. We dare never underestimate the power of evil, for as the apostle Paul warns us: “*We struggle not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*” (Ephesians 6:12)

At the same time, in dealing with an obscure passage like this one, we must humbly refrain from speculation. Sydney Page says it well as he urges Christians to deal with the text on its own terms without inflicting their own cultural expectations upon it and at the same time to “*respect the limitations of the revelation which God has chosen to give us*” :

*“The account of the intermarriage of the sons of god and the daughters of men is tantalizingly brief and mysterious, provoking many questions for which it provides no answers. It is tempting to fill with speculation the gaps in what has been revealed. Down through the centuries, the story has fascinated its readers. Fanciful elaborations of the story in the pseudepigraphal literature show the lengths to which one can go when approaching the text with creative imagination. We must, however, resist the temptation to indulge in such conjecture and respect the limitations of the revelation which God has chosen to give us.” (Page, p. 54)*



*“Demons Tormenting the Damned” by Luca Signorelli*

**“saw the daughters of men were beautiful”** - The language of this phrase deliberately reflects the description of humanity given in the preceding verse and must be understood in the same way. The human **“daughters of men”** stand in contrast to the angelic **“sons of god.”** The reference is not merely to Cainite women, but to human women generally, as is re-emphasized by the following phrase **“any of them they**

**chose.”** The text notes that the **“sons of god”** are attracted by the physical beauty of the **“daughters of men.”** Clement of Alexandria, a prominent Christian theologian early in the third century cites the example of these fallen angels as a warning to those who are drawn by earthly beauty away from the things of God:

*“The mind is carried away by pleasure and the unsullied principle of reason, when not instructed by the Word, slides down into licentiousness, and gets a fall as the due reward of its transgression. As example of this are the angels who renounced the beauty of God for a beauty which fades, and so fell from heaven to earth.”* (Clement, ANF, 2, p. 274)

Like mother Eve in the Garden, the sons of god act upon the basis of what looks good to them rather than on the basis of that which the Word of God defines as good. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit looked good (Hebrew - *“ki tob”*) and the sons of god saw that the daughters of men were beautiful (Hebrew - *“ki tobot”*). The Hebrew text clearly signals the similarity in the sequence of events – saw, good, took. When the woman saw and took, she transgressed a boundary set by the Lord. The same pattern is repeated here by the sons of god and the daughters of men. Luther draws the parallel:

*“With the same kind of eyes with which Eve looked at the fruit when she was about to sin in a moment, the sons of god look at the daughters of men. Eve had seen the forbidden tree even before that time, but with the eyes of faith that kept in mind God’s command; therefore, she had no desire for it, but fled from it. But when the eyes of her faith had been blinded and she looked at the tree merely with the eyes of flesh, she stretched out her hand with pleasure and encouraged her husband Adam to do the same thing.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 31)

**“and they married any of them they chose.”** - The text is careful to point out the complicity of humanity in these events. There is no suggestion of deception, seduction, coercion, or rape. The daughters of men and their families consent freely to marriages with the sons of god and thus bear full responsibility for the sin and must share in its consequences. Just as Adam’s sin was acquiescing to his wife’s disobedience by passively eating the fruit she gave him, so the sin of the daughters of men and their families was in yielding to the desire of the sons of god. If, indeed, these were supernatural creatures with marvelous abilities and magical knowledge, as indicated by the tales of the intertestamental books, the motive for humanity’s



*“The Fall of Man” by Lucas Cranach the Elder*

willingness is not difficult to understand. Once again, the subtle whisper of the serpent was heard - *“You will be like God.”*

### *Verse 3*

*Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal, his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”*

*“Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit...’”* - Our understanding of God’s response to the intermarriage of the sons of god with the daughters of men is muddled in the NIV’s translation of the Hebrew text. These events have indicated humanity’s continuing and accelerating moral degeneration. Mankind’s eager willingness to intermarry with the sons of god signals another rebellious attempt to break down the barrier between the Creator

and the creature, the divine and the human: an effort to regain the immortality lost by the Fall into sin (cf. Genesis 3:22). God rejects this pathetic attempt and sternly warns that His patience is not unlimited. *“My Spirit”* is not a reference to the third person of the Trinity, as suggested by the capitalization of the NIV text. It is, instead, a reference to life-giving power of God, *“the breath of life”* (Genesis 2:7), or the *“spirit of life”* (Genesis 6:7; 7:15). The words are used in the same way in Ezekiel 37:14 in the vision of the valley of the dry bones: *“I will put My spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.”* Sin brings death (Genesis 2:17). As a result of his deliberate disobedience of God, man brought down the judgment of death upon himself.

The NIV's translation of the verb in this phrase as "**contend**" is also unfortunate. This unusual Hebrew term ("yadon") is a "*hapax legomenon*" which means that it occurs only once in Holy Scripture. Without the benefit of comparative analysis, we must rely solely upon the immediate context of this verse to decipher the word's meaning. The ancient versions (i.e. the Septuagint and the Vulgate) suggest that the term means "*to remain.*" That meaning is reflected many English translations and is suggested in a footnote in the NIV. Understood in this sense, the phrase becomes an appropriate reference to human mortality as a result of the sinful corruption of the race and a warning of the impending destruction of the Flood. Immortality is not man's inalienable right but God's gracious gift. Sinful man has forfeited that gift and in the face of continuing rebellion and intensifying degradation, God finally says - "*Enough is enough! I am resolved to wipe humanity from the face of the earth. These people deserve to die and die they will!*"

But even at this point, God's loving patience and longsuffering is evident. One last period of grace is fixed for the repentance of mankind - "**his days will be a hundred and twenty years.**" Luther catches the precise sense of the phrase in his translation - "*I want to give them a reprieve of one hundred and twenty years.*" St. Peter refers to this remarkable divine forbearance when he writes: "**He (Jesus) was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.**" (1 Peter 3:18-19) St. Ephrem the Syrian, a prominent hymn writer and Bible commentator of the fourth century describes the significance of this phrase with these well-chosen words:

*"This generation will not live nine hundred years like the previous generations, for it is flesh and its days are filled with the deeds of flesh. Therefore, their days will be one hundred and twenty years. If they repent during this time, they will be saved from the wrath that is about to come upon them. But if they do not repent, by their deeds, they will call down wrath upon themselves. Grace granted one hundred and twenty years for repentance to a generation that according to justice, was not worthy of repentance."* (Louth, p. 125)

In this context, it is most appropriate that the divine name which occurs in this phrase is "*Yahweh,*" the love name of God, typically used to designate the gracious God of the covenant.



*“Joshua Destroys the Anakites” by J. James Tissot*

#### *Verse 4*

*The Nephilim were on the earth in those days - and also afterward - when the Sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children with them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.*

*“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days - and also afterward” -*

The transliteration “*Nephilim*” comes from the Hebrew verb “*napal*” which means “*to fall.*” Thus, the “*Nephelim*” are literally the “*those who have fallen,*” “*the fallen ones.*” The reference may be to the “*sons of God*” themselves, as angels who had fallen from their lofty position in heaven, or to the offspring that resulted from their marriages to

human women. The reference to the marriages and the children which came from them in the next phrase tends to favor the latter view. The word “*Nephelim*” is only used in one other Biblical text, Numbers 13:33. When the spies return from their investigation of the land of Canaan, they use the term “*nephelim*” to describe the inhabitants of that land. *“All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephelim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them.”* It seems that the spies, already thoroughly intimidated themselves, use this frightening exaggeration from the distant past to help spread their fear among the people. They seek to ascribe supernatural strength to their enemies by linking them to the fallen angels of long ago. Kenneth Matthews notes:

*“Nephilim is best taken in Numbers 13 as a scare tactic by the cowardly spies who drew on these shadowy figures from the past to win their case...When the spies appealed to the designation “Nephilim” as imposing adversaries, they drew on the reputation of the “Nephilim,” probably because of their association with an era infamous for its*



*violence.*” (Matthews, p. 338)

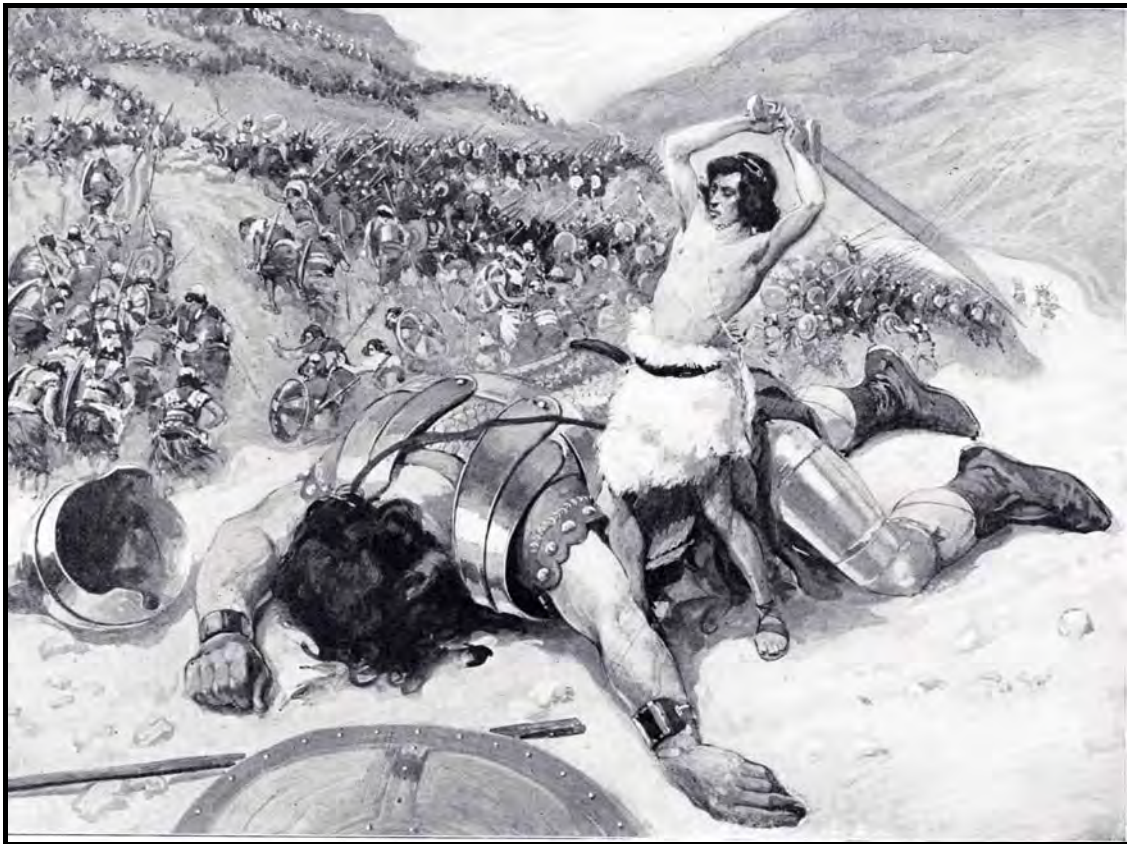
The connection between monstrous physical stature and “*Nephelim*” in the spies’ comments reflect the numerous fanciful traditions of the Jews on this subject. The “*Damascus Document*,” a first century B.C. Essene text discovered in Cairo, describes the Nephilim as the sons of the angelic “*Watchers of Heaven*” - “*as tall as cedar trees whose bodies were like mountains.*” (Kugel, p. 111) 1 Enoch goes even farther, announcing that the giants were 300 cubits tall and devoured all of the food on earth (cf. 1 Enoch 7:1-6), while Baruch 4:10 informs us that 409,000 of these massive creatures perished in the Flood. Louis Ginzberg, in his classic study “*The Legends of the Jews*,” reports the following among the traditions of the rabbis:

*“Of such were the women whose sensual charms tempted the angels from the path of virtue. The angels, on the other hand, no sooner had they descended to the earth than they lost their transcendental qualities, and were invested with sublunary bodies, so that a union with the daughters of men became possible. The offspring of these alliances between the angels and the Cainite women were the giants, known for their strength and their sinfulness; as their very name, the Emim, indicates, they inspired fear. They have many other names. Sometimes they go by the name Rephaim, because one glance at them made one’s heart grow weak; or by the name Gibborim, simply giants, because their size was so enormous that their thigh measured eighteen ells; or by the name Zamzummim, because they were great masters in war; or by the name Anakim, because they touched the sun with their neck; or by the name Ivvim, because, like the snake, they could judge the qualities of the soil; or finally, by the name Nephilim, because bringing the earth to its fall, they themselves fell.”* (Ginzberg, 1, p. 151)

Reflecting these traditions, the Septuagint translators rendered the word in Greek as “*hoi gigantes*,” (“*the giants*”). The KJV follows this unfortunate translation. If, indeed, great physical stature was one of the characteristics of the “*Nephilim*,” the text in Genesis gives no indication of it. Their defining characteristic, expressed in their very name, is that they were “*those who had fallen.*” The connotation of great size must be derived from the later reference in Numbers.

These “*fallen ones*” play a crucial role in the moral degradation of humanity from the time of their appearance - “*in those days*” and throughout the balance of the 120 year

grace period prior to the coming of the Flood. The additional phrase - *“and also afterward”* suggests that descendants of the *“Nephilim”* were still present in the days of Moses, as also indicated by the comments of the spies in Numbers 13. Evidently, one of the four wives on the ark was at least partially of *“Nephilim”* descent and through her the line survived the devastation of the Flood. The intriguing outcome of all this in the subsequent history of Israel is the dramatic confrontation between young David and the mighty Philistine giant Goliath who may well have been a descendant of the *“Nephilim”*. Numbers 13 links the *“Nephilim”* with *“the descendants of Anak”* (Number 13:33). Joshua 11:22 reports that the Anakites were exterminated by Joshua throughout Israelites territory but that remnants of their presence remained in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. Goliath, the Philistine champion slain by David, was from the city of Gath (cf. 1 Samuel 17:4).



*“David Slays Goliath” by J. James Tissot*

*“They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”* - The sober narration of Scripture is in glaring contrast to the fabulous myths and legends of the pagan world. There is no interest in colorful embellishment or epic exaggeration here. The facts are

presented in a simple, straightforward manner. The text is careful to maintain the clear distinction between the Creator and His creation. The “*Nephilim*” are not gods nor are their progeny some sort of partially divine, immortal demi-gods, like those who populate the tales of the heathen in great numbers. The children born to the sons of God and the daughters of men were “*the heroes of old.*” They may indeed have been mighty titans who accomplished great deeds but in the end they were mere mortals and now they are dead and gone. Sarna notes the text’s careful assertion of the unique nature of the Creator God:

*“The picture here presented of celestial beings intermarrying with women on earth...does not overstep the bounds of monotheism; there is only one God who passes judgment and makes decisions. The offspring of such unnatural union may have possessed heroic stature, but they have no divine qualities; they are flesh and blood like all humans. They are not only mortal, but their life-span is severely limited as compared with the personages listed in chapter 5. The one God is recognized as holding the sole title to the breath of life, which He controls as He wills.”* (Sarna, p. 45)

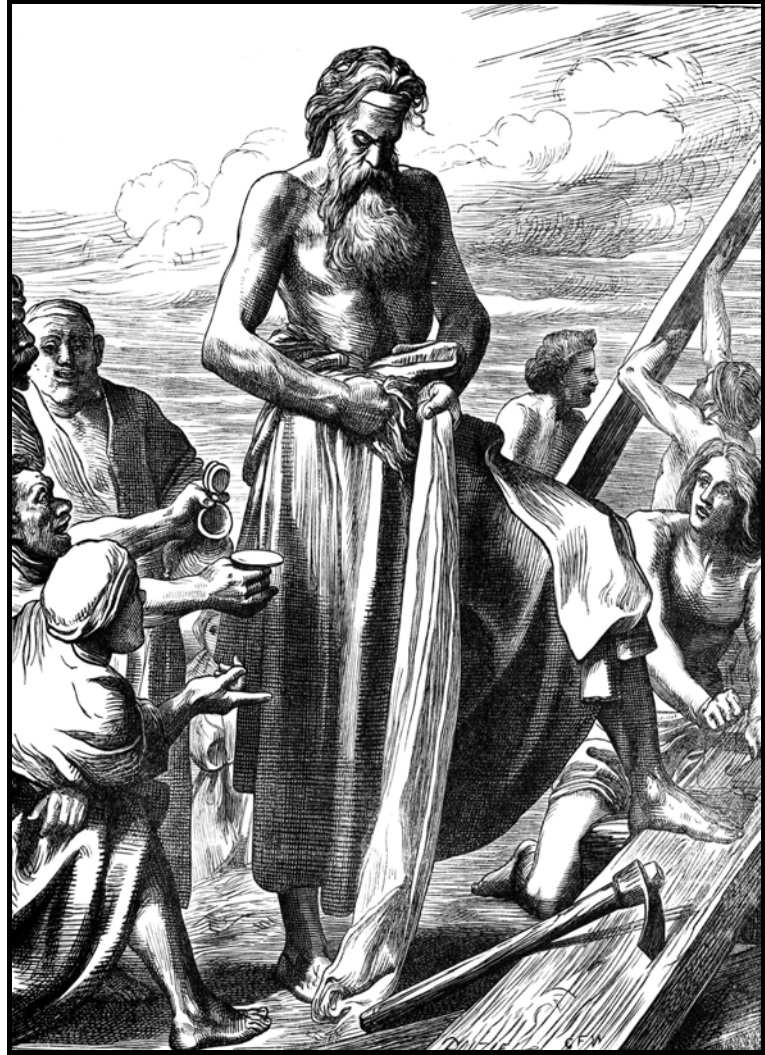
In the twisted and distorted perspective of rebellious humanity they were seen as “*men of renown*” and their fame lives on in the fables and mythologies of many nations. But in the sight of the Lord they were nothing more than ungodly men of violence and evil who led mankind down to destruction. Basil the Great offers this word of warning, based on the experience of the giants and their hapless descendant Goliath, to those who allow themselves to be impressed by such things:

*“Strength of arm, swiftness of foot, and comeliness of body - the spoils of sickness and the plunder of time - also awaken pride in man, unaware as he is that “All flesh is grass and all the glory of man as the flower in the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen.” Such was the arrogance of the giants because of their strength. Such also was the God defying pride of the witless Goliath.”* (Louth, p. 126)

### **Verse 5**

***The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.***

**“The Lord saw...”** - This phrase is used repeatedly in the Torah to introduce or explain decisive divine intervention (i.e. Genesis 6:12; 29:31; Exodus 2:25; 3:4; 4:31). The phrase clearly carries juridical overtones. This is the action of God the righteous Judge. It describes the fact that *“the limit of divine tolerance in the face of increasing evil has been reached.”* (Sarna, p. 47) The words are necessarily anthropomorphic, that is, describing the actions of the infinite, all-knowing God in the categories of human language and comprehension as if He were a man. The phrase should not be understood to indicate an unexpected realization or insight. Cassutto explains: *“It does not denote sudden perception, but the consideration of a state of affairs that had long been in existence, and on account of which a decision has to be taken.”* (Cassutto, p. 301) In this instance, the language recalls the refrain of Genesis 1 which concludes with the observation: **“God saw all that He had made and it was very good.”** (Genesis 1:31). The goodness of the original creation had been shattered by sin. The corrosive impact of that sin has thoroughly permeated and poisoned humanity and everything that it touches.



**“Noah Mocked by the Wicked” by G.F. Watts**

**“How great man’s wickedness on earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil all the time.”** - What God saw was both the extensiveness of sin and the intensiveness of sin. This text is a classic *“sedes doctrinae”* for the doctrine of the total depravity of man. The passage is unmistakably

clear is describing the pervasiveness of sin's corruption of humanity. The language is repeated and emphatic - ***“every inclination” “was only evil all the time.”*** The source of the problem is not external but internal - ***every inclination of the thoughts of his heart.*** Human machinations are attributed to the ***“heart”*** because in Hebrew anthropology the heart is the locus of human intellect and personality. The Bible refers to the heart over 1,000 times, using this term more frequently than any other to describe man's intellectual and moral activities. Nahum Sarna points out: *“In Biblical psychology, mental phenomena fall within the sphere of the heart which is the organ of thought, understanding, and volition, not merely of feeling.”* (Sarna, p. 47) For example, when 1 Kings 4:29 describes the unparalleled knowledge and wisdom of King Solomon, it speaks literally of *“the breadth of his heart.”* Proverbs 2:10 promises: ***“Then you will understand what is right and just and fair - every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.”*** On the contrary Proverbs warns that the Lord detests ***“a heart that devises wicked schemes.”*** (Proverbs 6:18). Accordingly, when the text of Genesis says of man ***“that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time”*** it is making a most profound and powerful assertion about the total corruption of human nature.

Martin Luther finds in this passage a strong assertion of man's absolute dependence upon the undeserved love of God in Christ. The Reformer offers this grim assessment of man's natural condition and his natural response to God and the things of God:

*“Hence we draw the universal conclusion that without the Holy Spirit and without grace, man can do nothing but sin and so goes on endlessly from sin to sin. But then there is also this added element that he does not uphold sound doctrine, rejects the Word of salvation, and resists the Holy Spirit, then, with the support of his own free will, he also becomes an enemy of God, blasphemes the Holy Spirit, and completely follows the evil desires of his own heart.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 40)

Few other texts in Scripture are so explicit and all-embracing in their specification of the radical nature of human sinfulness and the absolute helplessness of natural man in all matters spiritual. But this passage certainly does not stand alone.

***“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who***

*understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have become altogether corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”* (Psalm 14:1-3)

*“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”* (Psalm 51:5)

*“This is what the Lord says, ‘Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord...The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?’”* (Jeremiah 17:5,9)

*“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have become altogether worthless, there is no one that does good, not even one.’ ‘Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.’ ‘The poison of vipers is on their lips.’ ‘Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.’ Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’”* (Romans 3:10-18)

The reality of human sinfulness is much more pervasive and profound than a pattern of bad habits and unfortunate behavior. Sin is what we are, not merely what we do. The individual transgressions of God holy Law that we commit are the symptoms of our moral disease, not the disease itself. The recognition of the awful reality of human sin, and of man’s total helplessness before God, is essential to salvation. Only when we recognize our utter and absolute inability to help ourselves in any way whatsoever can we accurately assess and truly appreciate the wonder of God’s grace in Christ and our complete dependance upon that grace. Luther’s assertion of the centrality of this truth was unequivocal:

*“This knowledge of our sin is the beginning of our salvation, that we completely despair of ourselves and give to God alone the glory for our righteousness...When this fact is firmly established in our hearts, a large portion of the foundation for our salvation had been laid. Therefore we have the clear assurance that God does not cast aside sinners, that is, those who recognize their sin and desire to come to their senses, who thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6) or the forgiveness of their sins*

through Christ.” (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 41)



*“God is Love” by Rudolf Schäfer*

### **Verse 6**

***The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.***

***“The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth...”*** - This text presents us with a conundrum, an expression of the *“inherent tension between God’s transcendence and His immanence.”* (Sarna, p. 47) To state that ***“the Lord was grieved and His heart was filled with pain”*** is an example of *“anthropopathism,”* that is, the ascription of human emotion or feeling to God. Such language must be recognized as inherently inadequate; an attempt to express that which is necessarily ineffable. Scripture teaches the *“impassibility”* of God, that is, that God is not capable of being acted upon or effected emotionally by anything in creation. And yet, at the same time, the Biblical truth remains that the infinite, eternal God is love (1 John 4:8) and that in love He deigns to involve Himself in our world, most intimately and decisively in the incarnation of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We affirm that which the Bible

teaches despite the inability of our own human reason to comprehend or synthesize it. Franz Pieper expresses the apparent contradiction in the way:

*“Scripture indeed inculcates the impassibility of God most emphatically. It not only ascribes to Him the predicates **“the blessed and only Potentate”** and **“He who alone hath immortality,”** but also adds expressly that He dwells **“in a light which no man can approach unto”** (1 Timothy 6:15-16), so that no human eye can see Him and, much less, any human hand lay hold of Him and subject Him to suffering. Heaven cannot be stormed by men...The Bible teaches not only that God is unapproachable, invisible and untouchable, so far as men are concerned, but also, and this is its central theme, that the Son of God was made man, receiving into His person a human nature from a virgin, and becoming like other men. Through His incarnation, the Son of God, as it were, came out of the impenetrable light which hides Him from us and became visible and tangible to men.”* (Franz Pieper, 2, p. 139)

The Hebrew verb “yinnahem,” which the NIV translates as “**was grieved,**” literally means “to regret,” “to repent,” or “to change one’s mind.” A form of this word is used forty-eight times in the Old Testament. In thirty-four of these instances the subject is God (cf. i.e. Exodus 32:12,14; 1 Samuel 15:11; 2 Samuel 24:16; Jeremiah 18:10; Amos 7:3,6). One of the most mysterious and marvelous instances of the pattern at work is found in 2 Kings 20. Hezekiah, the king of Judah falls deathly ill. God sends the prophet Isaiah to the king with this message: “**This is what the Lord says: ‘Put your house in order because you will die; you will not recover.’**” (2 Kings 20:1) Hezekiah then prays to the Lord for healing and for life. The text reports God’s response to the King’s prayer in this way:

*“Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the Word of the Lord came to him: ‘Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of My people, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria.’”* (2 Kings 20:4-6)

The fervent prayer of the believer changed the decree of God! For many, the idea of God repenting, or changing His mind is a rather startling concept. Scripture clearly



teaches what our theologians call the “*immutability*” of God. God is not subject to change. The Psalmist rejoices:

***“In the beginning, You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing You will change them and they will be discarded. But You remain the same, and Your years will never end.”*** (Psalm 102: 25-27)

The apostle James affirms: ***“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*** (James 1:17) Moses contrasts the changelessness of God with the fickle unpredictability of man: ***“God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should change His mind. Does He speak, and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?”*** (Numbers 23:19) God indicates through the prophet Malachi that divine immutability is a crucial component in Israel’s hope of salvation: ***“I, the Lord, do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob are not destroyed.”*** (Malachi 3:6) With the hymn writer we pray: ***“Change and decay in all around I see! O Thou who changeth not, abide with me!”*** (Henry F. Lyte, “Abide with Me” - TLH # 552).

Lutheran theologian John P. Meyer summarizes the logical dilemma in this way:

***“When we, who are human beings, are subject to time and to the fluctuations of time, experience joy, disappointment, grief, repentance, we undergo changes, the effect of which will be cumulative; but how these same emotions can be predicated of God, who is not subject to time, without implying a change, either momentary or permanent, is beyond conception...Insoluble for our understanding is the apparent conflict between God’s immutability and His free personality.”*** (Meyer, p. 494)

The logical reconciliation of these Biblical truths is beyond our capacity. When confronted with what appears to our minds to be a contradiction in Scripture, the believer must humbly acknowledge his own inadequacy to comprehend the wonders of God. Let us instead, bow before Him in adoration and praise, rejoicing with the apostle: ***“O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How***

***unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?"***

(Romans 11:33-34) In dealing with such matters, we would do well to heed Martin Luther's eloquent admonition:

*"I follow this general rule: to avoid as much as possible any questions which carry us to the throne of Supreme Majesty. It is better and safer to stay at the manger of Christ, the Man. For there is very great danger in involving one's self in the mazes of the Divine Being...An investigation of this essential and divine will, or of the Divine Majesty must not be pursued, but altogether avoided. This will is unsearchable, and God does*

*not want to give us an insight into it in this life. He merely wanted to indicate it by means of some coverings: Baptism, the Word, the Sacrament of the Altar. These are the divine images...Through them God deals with us within the range of our comprehension."* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, pp. 45-47)



***"Martin Luther Preaching Christ Crucified"***  
***by Rudolf Schäfer***

***"And His heart was filled with pain."*** - God's response to the corruption of humanity and the impending destruction of life upon the earth is described in the strongest possible language. This Hebrew verb ("*asab*") is reserved for the expression of the most intense forms of emotion - a mixture a rage and bitter anguish. The word is used elsewhere to describe the re-action of Dinah's brothers to the rape of their sister (Genesis 34:7); the grief of David upon learning of the death of his son Absalom (2 Samuel 19:3); and the anguish of an innocent wife who has been deserted and betrayed by her faithless husband (Isaiah 54:6). Only two other Old Testament texts

use this powerful verb in reference to God. In Psalm 78:40-41, *“asab”* describes the re-action of God to the flagrant and repeated unfaithfulness of Israel: ***“How often they rebelled against Him in the desert and grieved Him in the wasteland! Again and again they put God to the test; they vexed the Holy One of Israel.”*** The prophet Isaiah uses the term in a similar context to describe God’s response to the ingratitude and rebellion of His people: ***“Yet, they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. So He turned and became their enemy, and He Himself fought against them.”*** (Isaiah 63:10) Here, in Genesis, the force of the word is strengthened even more by the addition of the phrase ***“in His heart.”*** This painful disappointment pierces to the very core of God’s being. The purpose of creation had been loving harmony between the Creator and the creature fashioned in His own image and likeness. That divine intent has been frustrated by man’s defiant, sinful rejection of God and His love.

### ***Verse 7***

***So the Lord said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them.”***

***“So the Lord said”*** - Genesis has consistently indicated events of particular significance by introducing them *“divine deliberation.”* God thinks out loud, as it were, thereby enabling us to recognize the importance of what is about to take place and understand its meaning. *“Divine deliberation”* offers us a crucial insight into the mind and motives of God. This is the second instance of *“divine deliberation”* in this segment, the first having occurred in Genesis 6:3. God’s decision has been made. The resolve to exercise righteous judgment in the destruction of humanity is now in place.

***“I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth...”*** - The Lord’s resolve is to eliminate the problem at its source - man. The text uses the Hebrew verb *“maha”* to describe God’s method of judgment. The use of this particular verb is most appropriate. The basic meaning of *“maha”* is *“to erase by washing with water.”* It is used most commonly to refer to the removal of written letters from a page with water. God uses the same word to describe His irrevocable judgment upon the Amalekites: ***“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely erase the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven.’”*** (Exodus 17:14; cf. also Exodus 32:32-33; Numbers 5:23; Psalm 69:28).



*“The Patriarch Noah” by J. James Tissot*

The qualifying phrase “*whom I have created*” serves to remind the reader of the identity of God as the Creator of all things who has the right to execute judgment upon that which He has made. That right belongs to God alone. As the Creator He has the right to undo what He has done. In Genesis 3, the ground was cursed as a result of man’s sin (Genesis 3:17). Now, the animal kingdom will perish along with humanity. Everything else that was created had been fashioned as a part of the perfect environment for man. As man’s spiritual condition and relationship with God changes, those changes are necessarily impact the entire physical world. The language of the verse deliberately echoes the creation account of Genesis 1 (cf. Genesis 1:20,24-30). It is the Sovereign’s intent to reverse what He had done in the beginning.

### *Verse 8*

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*

*“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”* - This grim segment of the Book of Genesis ends with a glimmer of hope. Amid the nearly universal corruption of humanity, one figure stands out. Not the technological advances of the

material civilization that had developed among the sons of Cain, nor the multitude of the children of men, nor the might of the mighty men conceived by the fallen sons of god, nor the fame acquired by these great heroes of ancient times - none of these things could avail in the hour of God's judgment. Only Noah ***“found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”*** This intriguing phrase is used very rarely in reference to individuals in the Old Testament. It describes Moses himself in Exodus 33:17 as God graciously unveils His glory before him - ***“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.’”*** Luther notes the parallel expression in Gabriel's salutation to Mary - ***“Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God.”*** (Luke 1:30) The Reformer concludes: *“This expression very clearly rules out any kind of merit and gives praise to faith, by which alone we are justified before God, that is, are acceptable to God and please Him.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 54) The text does not suggest some moral quality in Noah which enabled him to earn God's favor. The Hebrew noun *“hen”* here translated as ***“favor”*** might more precisely be translated as *“grace.”* The favor which God demonstrates toward Noah is as totally undeserved as the love which He demonstrates toward you and me.

*“At the stage, the Bible wishes to inform us that at the very moment in which the Lord decreed punishment upon the wicked, He prepared, by means of the righteous man, salvation for the world and the fulfillment of His promises to mankind. Thus the section ends on a note of grace.”*  
(Cassutto, p. 307)

### ***Verse 9***

***This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.***

***“This is the account of Noah.”*** - The occurrence of the now familiar *“toledoth”* formula - ***“This is the account of...”*** signals the beginning of the next major segment of the narrative of Genesis, the story of Noah and the Flood (cf. Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 10:1; 11:27, etc.). The birth of Noah had been announced in Genesis 5:29. In bestowing upon his son the name ***“Noah,”*** which means *“comfort”* or *“rest,”* Lamech had anticipated the critical role that this man would play in the story of the race. The significance of this birth is indicated in a number of ways. Noah is the tenth

generation since creation. His is the first birth recorded after the death of father Adam, and in this way his role “*as the second father of mankind after all other descendants of Adam have been destroyed*” (IDB, 3, 554) is signaled.

**“Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time...”** - The story of the Flood is introduced with an emphatic description of the personal character of the patriarch Noah. With threefold repetition, the text emphasizes the nature of this man, called by God to play a critical role in the history of our race. Leupold notes the appropriateness of this approach:

*“Since so much depends in this instance upon the personal character of Noah, nothing is more natural than to indicate very plainly just what manner of man he was. If out of all of his contemporaries he alone with his family is saved, then he must have been most unusual. To stand ones ground and remain uninfluenced by the attitude and conduct of all men to the contrary, give indication of a strength of character almost without parallel in history. All the world said he was wrong in holding fast to his piety; he knew they were wrong and they were right.”* (Leupold, II, p. 54)

The structure of the Hebrew text is most unusual. The three phrases include ten words. This may represent a deliberate attempt to remind the reader that Noah is the tenth generation from Adam. In his classic study, *Number in Scripture*, Ethelbert Bullinger describes the significance of the number ten in this way:

*“Ten is one of the perfect numbers, and signifies the perfection of divine order...Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”* (Bullinger, p. 243)

The structure of the verse is carefully balanced. The Hebrew is literally translated as follows: “*Noah, a man righteous - blameless among the people of his time - with God did walk Noah.*” The sequence both begins and ends with Noah’s name, linguistically shining the spotlight, as it were, on this pivotal individual.

Three phrases reiterate and emphasize Noah’s unique character. First, **“Noah was a righteous man.”** The word **“righteous”** (Hebrew - “*saddiq*”) is a prominent term in

the Old Testament. This is the first of two hundred and six occurrences in the Old Testament. It is used most often in contrast to the wicked, those who do not believe in God and spurn His way. It carries a definite forensic, that is, courtroom connotation, indicating that one has been declared by a judge to be innocent, not guilty, justified. Noah, like all the saints of the Old Testament, believed in the promise of salvation through the Messiah, the Seed of the Woman, and on the basis of that faith God, the Judge, declared him to be righteous. This, of course, did not mean that Noah was without sin. He was justified by faith, just as we are, and he lived in the same daily saint/sinner struggle in which we live. But as a justified child of God who sins were forgiven in Christ, Noah's faith was evident in a life that sought to please God by a lifestyle that was consistent with His will. Ezekiel tells us that the righteous man is one *"who does what is just and right"* and consistently demonstrates the love of God in the manner of his life (cf. Ezekiel 18:5-9). Noah was a man who had *"found favor in God's eyes,"* that is, he had received grace, undeserved love from God (Genesis 6:8). Noah's righteousness is the result of that undeserved love. To put this vitally important distinction in other words - Noah was not chosen because he was righteous: he was righteous because He was chosen.



*"Shem, Ham, and Japheth - Noah's Sons" by J. James Tissot*

Because of that divine declaration of righteousness, Noah was also **“blameless”** (Hebrew - *“tamim”*). In the Hebrew text the two adjectives **“righteous”** and **“blameless”** are closely linked to one another. The word *“tamim”* means *“complete”* or *“sound.”* In the context of Old Testament worship, the word is used more frequently in reference to the unblemished animals presented to the Lord for sacrifice. Its use here in conjunction with **“righteous”** is most appropriate. It does not imply moral perfection or sinlessness. Noah was not morally perfect, as subsequent lapses will clearly indicate (cf. Genesis 9:20-27). Yet, he was without blame before God because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is precisely Paul’s point in 2 Corinthians 5:19 when he says: **“God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them.”** Surrounded by the corruption of a dying world, Noah stood out in the crowd. He was **“blameless among the people of his time.”** Noah was a devout man. His saving faith in the promised Messiah was not confined to the inner recesses of his heart but showed itself in every dimension of his life. This is as it must be for as James, the apostle declares - **“Faith without works is dead.”** (James 2:26). To live by faith in the last days of a dying world meant that Noah would have to stand virtually alone against the wickedness and corruption of his age. The Revised English Bible catches the sense of the text in its translation - *“the one blameless man of his time.”* Martin Luther, himself no stranger to steadfast testimony in the face of nearly universal opposition, notes the remarkable courage required for the living of such a lonely life:

*“To us today it seems impossible that one man should defy the entire world and condemn as evil all the rest, who glory in the church, the Word, and the worship of God, and that he should maintain that he alone is a son of God and acceptable to God. Noah, accordingly, is a truly amazing man.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 56)

In the New Testament, Peter describes the patriarch as **“a preacher of righteousness”** (2 Peter 2:5) and the letter to the Hebrews says to Noah that **“By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”** (Hebrews 11:7) The apocryphal *“Sibylline Oracles,”* written late in the last century before Christ, provides a detailed summary of the preaching of Noah and of the people’s reaction to it:

*“Men, sated with faithlessness, smitten with a great madness, what you did will not escape the notice of God, for He knows all things, the*



*immortal Savior who oversees everything, who commanded me to announce to you, so that you may not be destroyed by your hearts. Be sober, cut off evils, and stop fighting violently with each other, having a bloodthirsty heart, drenching much earth with human blood. Mortals, stand in awe of the exceedingly great, fearless heavenly Creator, imperishable God, who inhabits the vault of heaven, and entreat Him, all of you - for He is good - for life, cities, and the whole world, four-footed animals and birds, so that He will be gracious to all. For the time will come when the whole immense world of men perishing by waters will wail with a dreadful refrain. Suddenly, you will find the air in confusion and the wrath of the great God will come upon you from heaven. It will truly come to pass that the immortal Savior will cast forth upon men...unless you propitiate God and repent as from now, and no longer anyone do anything ill-tempered or evil, lawlessly against one another but be guarded in holy life.” When they heard him they sneered at him, each one, calling him demented, a man gone mad. Then Noah cried out a refrain: “O very wretched, evil-hearted fickle men, abandoning modesty, desiring shamelessness, tyrants in fickleness and violent sinners, liars, sated with faithlessness, evildoers, truthful in nothing, adulterers, ingenious at pouring out slander, not fearing the anger of the most high God.” (“Sybylline Oracles” 1, 150-179)*

The final phrase in the threefold description of the character of Noah - **“and he walked with God”** - recalls the exemplary piety of Enoch (cf. Genesis 5:22-24). Hebrew tradition further reports that Noah’s wife was the daughter of Enoch, and the Noah arranged of the marriage of his three sons to the daughters of Methuselah.

**“Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”** - Specific mention is made of the fact that Noah had three sons who were destined to survive the Flood along with their father. The repetition of announcement of the birth of the sons of Noah indicates their unique importance. For through Shem, Ham and Japheth the posterity of the human race will be preserved. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 will identify these three as the ancestors of all of the various nations of the world. Genesis 5:32 had reported that the boys were not born until Noah was already 500 years old. Luther makes much of this fact. He contends that Noah’s celibacy until this advanced age was a protest against the corruption and moral degeneration of his day, as he dedicated his life to traveling back and forth across the world to proclaim the impending judgment of God:



*“The Family of Noah” by Han Sebald Beham*

*“Moreover, it is likely that he traveled all over the entire world and preached everywhere, giving instructions concerning the true worship of God. His strenuous efforts restrained him from marriage because of his extreme distress, but he was waiting for a better and more God-fearing age. But when he realized that this was a mistaken hope and the divine voice indicated to him a definite time when the world would perish, then he was prompted by the Holy Spirit to turn his mind to marriage, in order that he might leave at least a seed for the new age. In this way the holy man preserved the human race not only spiritually in the true Word and worship but also physically through procreation.” (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 57)*

While such speculation is intriguing, it has no basis in the Biblical text and should be received with appropriate caution. Noah may well have had numerous other children, both sons and daughters, prior to and after the birth of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These three are singled out, not necessarily because they were Noah’s only children, but because they were the three who accompanied him and the ark and survived the deluge.

No indication is given of the three boys’ spiritual condition, although the fact that they were spared along with their father strongly suggests that they must have shared in his faith. This is certainly the view of the prophet Ezekiel who uses Noah as an

illustration of the truth that no man can be saved by the faith of another. In fact, Ezekiel specifically asserts that Noah's faith could not save his own sons or daughters:

***“Son of man, if a country sins against Me by being unfaithful and I stretch out My hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign Lord...even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved but the land would be desolate.”***  
(Ezekiel 14:12-14,16)

### ***Verses 11-12***

***Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on the earth had corrupted their ways.***

***“Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence.”*** - Two powerful phrases describe the absolute moral degradation of humanity in the era prior to the Flood. First, ***“the earth was corrupt in God's sight.”*** The verb ***“to become corrupt”*** (Hebrew - ***“sahat”***) appears three times in this pair of verses to emphasize the utter ruination of that God had made: ***“the earth was corrupt in God's sight;” “how corrupt the earth had become;” “all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.”*** Jeremiah 18:4 uses the same verb to describe clay that is spoiled in the hands of the potter and must therefore be totally reworked: ***“But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as it seemed best to him.”*** So also the corrupted earth has now become so thoroughly permeated with evil that it must now be refashioned by the hands of the Creator who had formed it in the beginning. As one commentator colorfully observes: ***“God saw that the ailment afflicting Noah's world was not a light case of spiritual measles, but terminal cancer.”*** (Jeske, p. 78) The text refers to the corruption of ***“the earth”*** although it is mankind, not the planet itself which has become corrupt. The Torah consistently asserts that the perverted practices of the land's inhabitants defile it, thereby making it impossible for the holy God to dwell there. For example, in Leviticus 18: 25-28, God warns the Israelites not to indulge in the detestable sins of the Canaanites whose wickedness defiled the very land in which they lived and were

therefore deprived of their land and driven out. God uses the dramatic imagery of the land itself being sickened by the wickedness of its inhabitants and then vomiting them out like a physical body expelling that which is poisoning it:

***“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you must keep My decrees and My laws. The native born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”*** (Leviticus 18:25-28)

The earth was not only “**corrupt**” but also “**full of violence**.” The Hebrew term “**hamas**,” used in this phrase, refers to “*the cold-blooded unscrupulous infringement of the personal rights of others, motivated by greed and hate, and often making use of physical violence and brutality.*” (TDOT, 4, 482) Given the emphasis on the sanctity of human life in the instructions which follow the Flood (cf. Genesis 9:4-6), and the role of bloodshed in polluting the land (cf. Numbers 35:33 - “**Bloodshed pollutes the land and atonement cannot be made for land upon which blood has been shed except by the blood of the one who shed it.**”) “**hamas**” in this context



***“The Deluge” by Hans Baldung Grien***

should be understood as a reference to murder and the widespread destruction of human life. Nahum Sarna is correct in his assertion: *“ Hamas here refers predominantly to the arrogant disregard for the sanctity and inviolability of human life.”* (Sarna, p. 51) We who live in a land defiled by the blood of tens of millions of innocent unborn children cannot but shudder at the fearsome judgment which overtook the world in the days of Noah.

Scripture repeatedly describes the Flood as a precursor of the Final Judgment. The New Testament warns that the days before the Second Coming of Christ will closely parallel the days of Noah. Jesus warns:

***“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the Flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the Flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*** (Matthew 24:37-39; cf. also Luke 17: 26-27)

The point of comparison in our Lord’s warning is mankind’s utter unawareness of impending judgment. The pre-Flood world that catastrophic destruction was about to come upon it, despite the repeated warnings of Noah over more than a century. They refused to heed his words. They dismissed his actions, as the ark was being built, as those of a lunatic. They remained completely consumed by themselves and the mindless pursuit of their own sinful pleasures. The arrival of the Flood took them totally by surprise.

Peter suggests that the growing opposition of humanity to the Word of the Gospel in the last days will be like the stubborn rejection of those who perished in the Flood:

***“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this coming He promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same Word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept***

*for the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3: 3-7)*



*“The Lord Appears to Noah”  
by J. James Tissot*

Noah stood as a solitary saint in a world that was rushing headlong toward its own destruction. He was not cowed into silence by the pervasive evil of the times in which he lived. Instead, he was a faithful witness, a **“preacher of righteousness.”** Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of mankind spurned his warnings until it was too late. The Flood came upon them unawares and they perished - **“That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”**

### *Verse 13*

*So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”*

**“So God said to Noah...”** - God graciously deigns to take righteous Noah into His confidence. This is the first of four divine speeches in the Flood Narrative (cf. Genesis 6:13-21; 7:1-4; 8:15-17; 9:1-17). Nowhere does Noah respond to challenge what God intends or to offer an opinion of his own. God

speaks. Man implements. This is an announcement of what is about to happen. It is not a consultation between two peers. The phrasing of the divine decree stresses that it is inevitable and irrevocable. The text literally says - *“The end of all flesh has been determined by Me.”* Leupold observes that this kind of *“point of no return,”* in

which the time of grace is over and the time for judgment then must come, is characteristic of all God's dealings with men:

*“There come times in the events of this world when God's gracious dealings with men are definitely terminated. Such times come only when grace has been offered in richest measure. But when the end is resolved upon there is no recall. Such a case is marked by the 'end' that God here determines.”* (Leupold, pp. 268-269)

God's action in destroying humanity is not arbitrary. This prologue to the Flood account carefully and repeatedly emphasizes the justice and appropriateness of that which God has determined to do. This important point is stressed by that fact that the text uses two very similar Hebrew verbs, drawn from the same stem, to describe what mankind has done to the earth in verse 12 and what God will do to mankind in verse 13. In the perfect justice of God, the punishment always fits the crime. Mankind has destroyed the earth and now God will destroy mankind.

Note also the comprehensive scope of the judgment which God announces. ***“I am going to destroy all people...I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”*** The language of the text is most explicit. The catastrophic destruction which God is about to cause will be completely comprehensive, involving all of humanity and the entire earth itself. The language with which Peter will later recall these terrible events is equally comprehensive - ***“By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.”*** (2 Peter 3:6)

### ***Verses 14-16***

***So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: the ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle, and upper decks.***

***“So make yourself an ark of cypress wood...”*** - God instructs Noah to build a unique vessel. He calls that vessel an ***“ark”*** (Hebrew - *“tevah”*). Outside of the story of the Flood, the only other instance in which this term is used is in reference to the basket of bull rushes in which the infant Moses is concealed in the marshes along the Nile (cf. Exodus 2:3-5). The Hebrew noun appears to have been drawn from an



*“The Building of the Ark” by J. James Tissot*

ancient Egyptian word which means “chest,” “box,” or “coffin.” The English word “ark” has a similar etymology coming from the Latin verb “acere” which means “to enclose” or “to place in a box.” In Hebrew, a different word, “aron,” is used in reference to the sacred Ark of the Covenant. The semantic similarity of the two terms is indicated by the fact that both are translated in Greek with the same word, “kibotos.” It is significant to note that Noah’s vessel is not described as a boat or a ship but a box. It apparently lacked the prow and rudder of typical sailing vessels which are designed to move forward through the water. As the detailed specifications which follow indicate, the ark was not designed for forward movement. It was a huge rectangular box, designed for maximum stability not maneuverability. As the ancient rabbis pointed out, the ark need neither rudder nor helmsman for it was guided throughout its voyage by the mighty hand of God. The ark was admirably suited for its purpose of riding out the storms and surging waves of the great Flood.

The NIV translates the material of which the ark was to be constructed as “*cypress wood.*” The Hebrew text actually refers to “*gopher wood,*” however, this is the only



instance in Scripture where the term is used. Hence any specific identification of the type of wood utilized must remain uncertain. Traditional rabbinic sources tended to favor cedar. Cypress, widely used in ship building in ancient times due to its resistance to rot, is as good a guess as any, but it is little more than a guess.

***“Make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.”*** - God instructs Noah to sub-divide the interior space in the ark into compartments. The Hebrew word is *“kinnim”* which literally means *“nests,”* a most appropriate designation, given the use to which God planned to put the ark. The wood is to be coated with pitch (Hebrew - *“kopher”*) to protect it and render it watertight. The ark of Moses was covered with the same material, and the parallel serves to emphasize the similarity between Noah and Moses as men chosen by God to be delivered from the waters in an ark so that they might lead God’s people into a new era of their history.

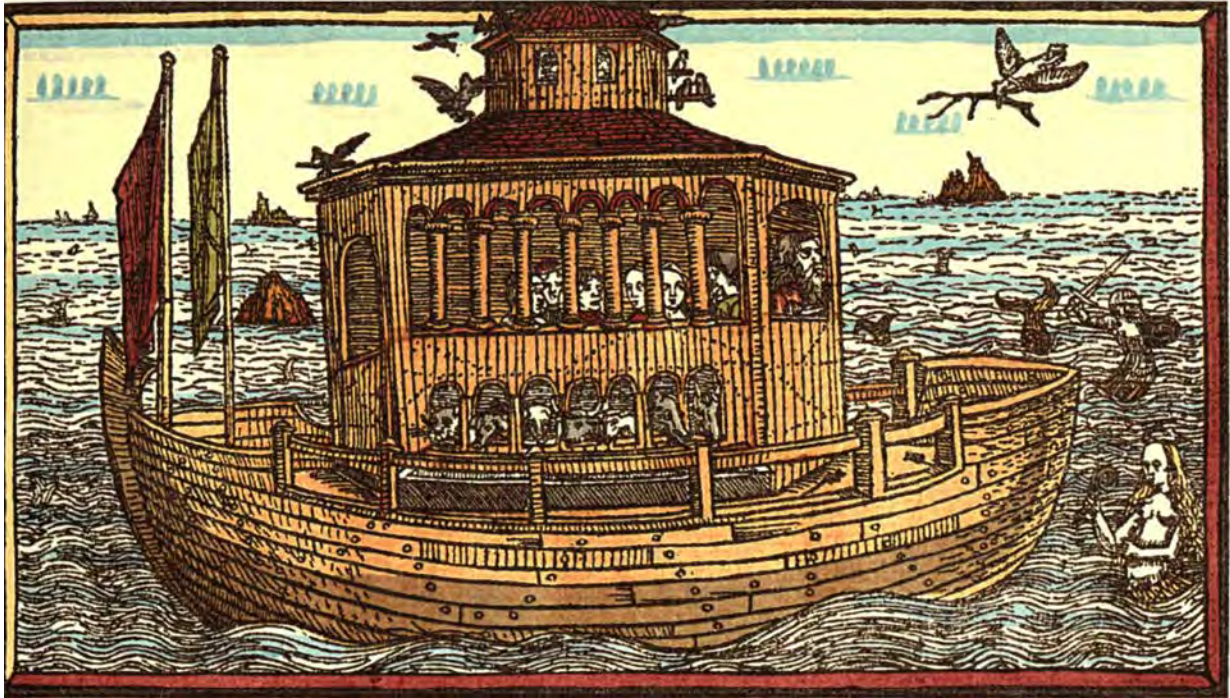
***“This is how you are to build it...”*** - The language and style of these brief guidelines for the construction of the ark parallel the directions given for the building of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31), thus suggesting the similarities of the ark and the Tabernacle as sanctuaries for the righteous. The New Testament draws a similar parallel when it compares the Christian Church to the ark. In describing Christ’s triumphant descent into Hell, Peter declares:

***“He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it, only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”*** (1 Peter 3:18-21)

Luther develops the same image in the great *“Flood Prayer”* of his 1526 revision of the Liturgy of Holy Baptism.

*“Almighty, eternal God, who according to Thy righteous judgment didst condemn the unbelieving world through the Flood and in Thy great mercy didst preserve believing Noah and his family...Behold this child and bless him with true faith in the Spirit so that by means of this saving flood all that has been born into him from Adam and which he himself has added thereto may be drowned in him and engulfed, and that he may*

*be sundered from the number of the unbelieving, preserved dry and secure in the holy ark of Christendom.” (Martin Luther, AE, 53, pp. 107-108)*



*“Noah’s Ark” from the “Lübecker Bibel” - 1494*

St. Augustine carries the symbolism of the ark even further in *The City of God*. Not only the ark itself, but its dimensions and its furnishings take on symbolic significance in reference to Christ and the Church.

*“Undoubtedly, the ark is a symbol of the city of God in its pilgrimage through history. It is a figure of the church that was saved by wood on which there hung the ‘Mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus.’ Even the very measurements of length, height, and breadth of the ark are meant to point to the reality of the human body into which He came as it was foretold that He would come...As for the door in the side, that, surely, symbolizes the open wound made by the lance in the side of the Crucified - the door by which those who come to Him enter in, in the sense that believers enter the Church by means of the Sacraments that issued from that wound. It was ordered that the ark be made out of squared timbers - a symbol of the four-square stability of a holy life, which, like a cube, stands firm however it is turned. So it is*

*with every other detail of the ark's construction. They are all symbols of something in the Church.” (Augustine, 15, 26)*

While this most learned doctor of the Church may have pressed the point a bit too far, the use of the ark as a symbol of the Christian Church remains prevalent throughout Church History. The ancient tradition of designating the main area of the church building as the “*nave*,” from the Latin “*navis*” - “*ship*” is also drawn from this source. The ship of the Church preserves the souls of men amidst the storms of life, like the ark preserved faithful Noah and his family amidst the surging waters of the Flood.

**“The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.”** - Genesis provides the dimensions of the ark in cubits. Ideally, a cubit is the distance between the tip of a man’s (usually the King!) Longest finger and his elbow. Accordingly, the actual length of the cubit varied widely depending on the stature of the individual upon whom it was based. Henry Morris reports:

*“The Babylonians had a royal cubit of about 19.8 inches; the Egyptians had a longer and shorter cubit of about 20.65 and 17.6 inches, respectively; and the Hebrews had a long cubit of about 20.4 inches (Ezekiel 40:5) and a common cubit of about 17.5 inches. Still another common cubit of Biblical times was 24 inches.” (Morris, p. 181)*

The dimensions given in the NIV are based on the common assumption that the Biblical cubit was about 18 inches long. While this may be a reasonable assumption, it is only an assumption. If, in fact, a longer cubit unit of measurement was used, the ark could have been considerably larger. Using a 24 inch cubit, for instance, the ark would have been 600 feet long, 100 feet wide, and sixty feet high!

Assuming the more conservative 18 inch cubit, the ark would have had 101,250 square feet of deck space on its three levels - equivalent to the area of slightly more than twenty-one standard college basketball courts. Taller than a four story building, its gross tonnage would have been 13,960 tons, which would place it well within the category of large modern ocean going vessels.

Bible critics insist that the construction of a ship of this magnitude was beyond the capacity of ancient man. Modern technology did not build a vessel that big until the launching of the Cunard Ocean Liner “*Eturia*” in 1884. The “*Queen Mary*,” one of

the greatest ocean liners of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, by way of comparison, is just over twice as long as the ark. The critics make two erroneous assumptions. First, they presume that the world which perished in the Flood was technologically primitive, at least in comparison to our advanced modern society. Depending on the nature of the genealogies in Genesis, mankind lived upon the earth for at least 1,500 years before the Flood. During that period, typical life-spans were ten times what they are today.



*“The Building of the Ark” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

The Biblical text has already alluded to significant technological advances during the antediluvian era. Given these realities, the world which perished in the Flood may well have achieved significant technological advancement. The assumption that Noah and his pre-flood contemporaries lived in extremely primitive conditions, while gratifying to the egos of arrogant moderns, is inconsistent with the facts of the situation. The second error of Bible critics is to drastically underestimate the construction capabilities of relatively unsophisticated primitive cultures. Even after the Flood, when pre-flood advances in science and technology would have been lost,

many ancient cultures accomplished feats of construction that remain impressive by contemporary standards. The Great Pyramid at Giza was constructed during the Fourth Dynasty of Egypt's Old Kingdom, long before the time of Abraham! This massive monument contains over two million blocks of stone, each weighing about two and a half tons! The vast sides of the pyramid, each seven hundred and fifty six feet long, were erected with a maximum error of eight inches (.09%). The sides of the pyramid are set to the points of the compass to an accuracy of an eleventh of a degree! This technological masterpiece is so impressive that some baffled moderns with unrestrained imaginations have concluded that it must have been built by aliens from outer space. But the pyramids do not stand alone. The massive statues of Pharaoh Memnon, of the Eighteenth Dynasty, are cut from blocks of sandstone that weigh four hundred tons each, and were transported from 600 miles away to their present location. The ancient Greeks also accomplished some astonishing architectural feats. The lintel to the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus was carved from a single stone which weighed 120 tons. The Temple of Jupiter at Baalbek in Syria includes a huge retaining wall built from blocks of stone that weigh 700 tons. The magnificent Pharos Lighthouse in Alexandria towered 440 feet above the breakwater of the harbor. The list could go on to mention the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Great Wall of China, etc. We have no reason to suppose that early man was afraid to tackle great tasks or lacked the ability to carry them out.

The apocryphal *"Sibylline Oracles"* resolves concerns about the construction of the ark by ascribing Noah's skill to supernatural intervention by God. Their supposition may not be too far off the mark. God is reported to have assured Noah:

*"God Himself spoke as follows from heaven... 'But I bid you to construct quickly an imperishable wooden house, flourishing with unthirsting roots. I will place a mind in your breast, and crafty skill and will put measures in your lap. I will take care of everything, so that you and as many as live with you will be saved.'" (1:130-135)*

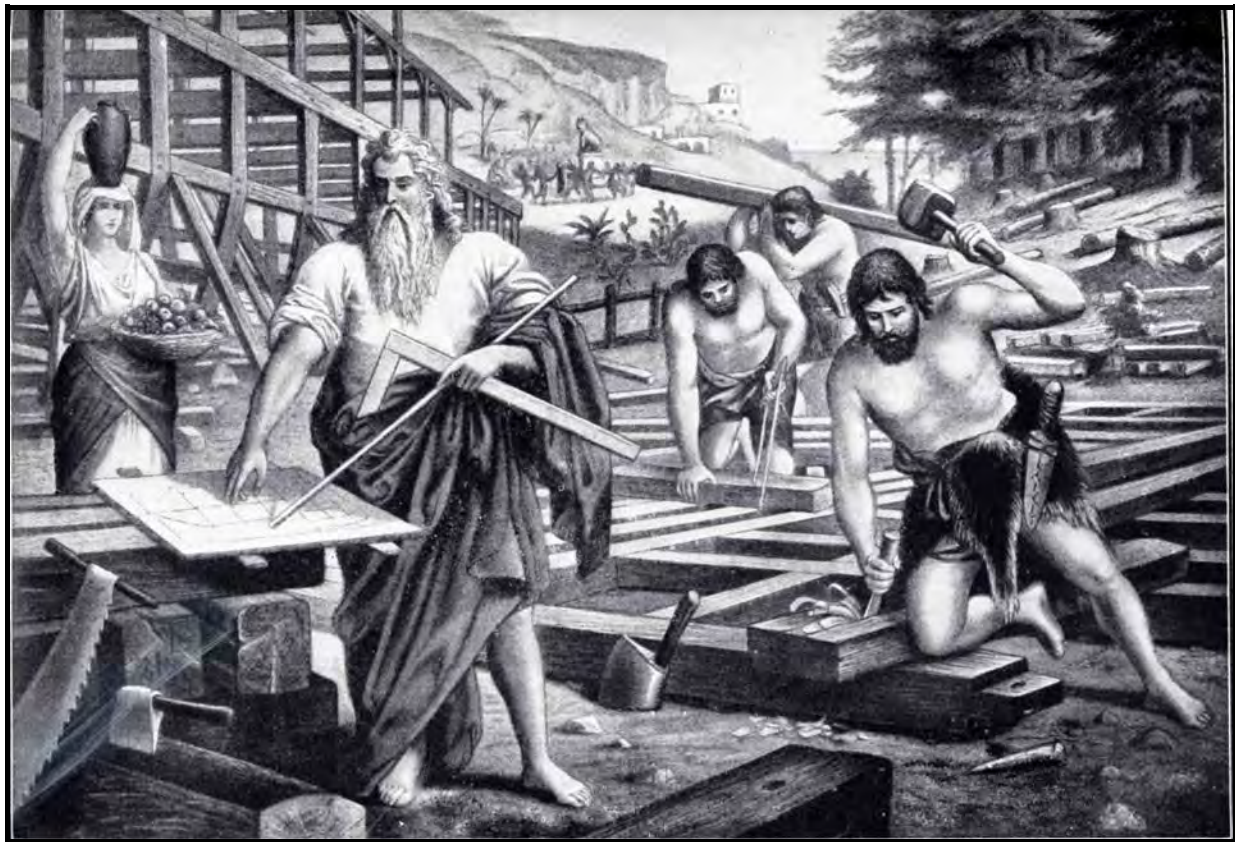
The hydrodynamics of a gigantic box, configured in this way, would result in a vessel which was extremely stable, virtually impossible to capsize, even in heavy waves and violent winds. In fact, the ark could have tilted to any angle of to 90 degrees and it would still right itself in the water. Furthermore, the relatively great length of the ark in proportion to its width (the ark was six times longer than it was wide) would tend to align the vessel parallel with the direction of major wave advance and resist vortex action, both significant factors in the turbulent waters which covered the earth during

the Flood. The massive oil tankers of our own era reflect the same design principles.

### ***Verse 16***

***Make a roof for it, and finish the ark within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark, and make lower, middle, and upper decks.***

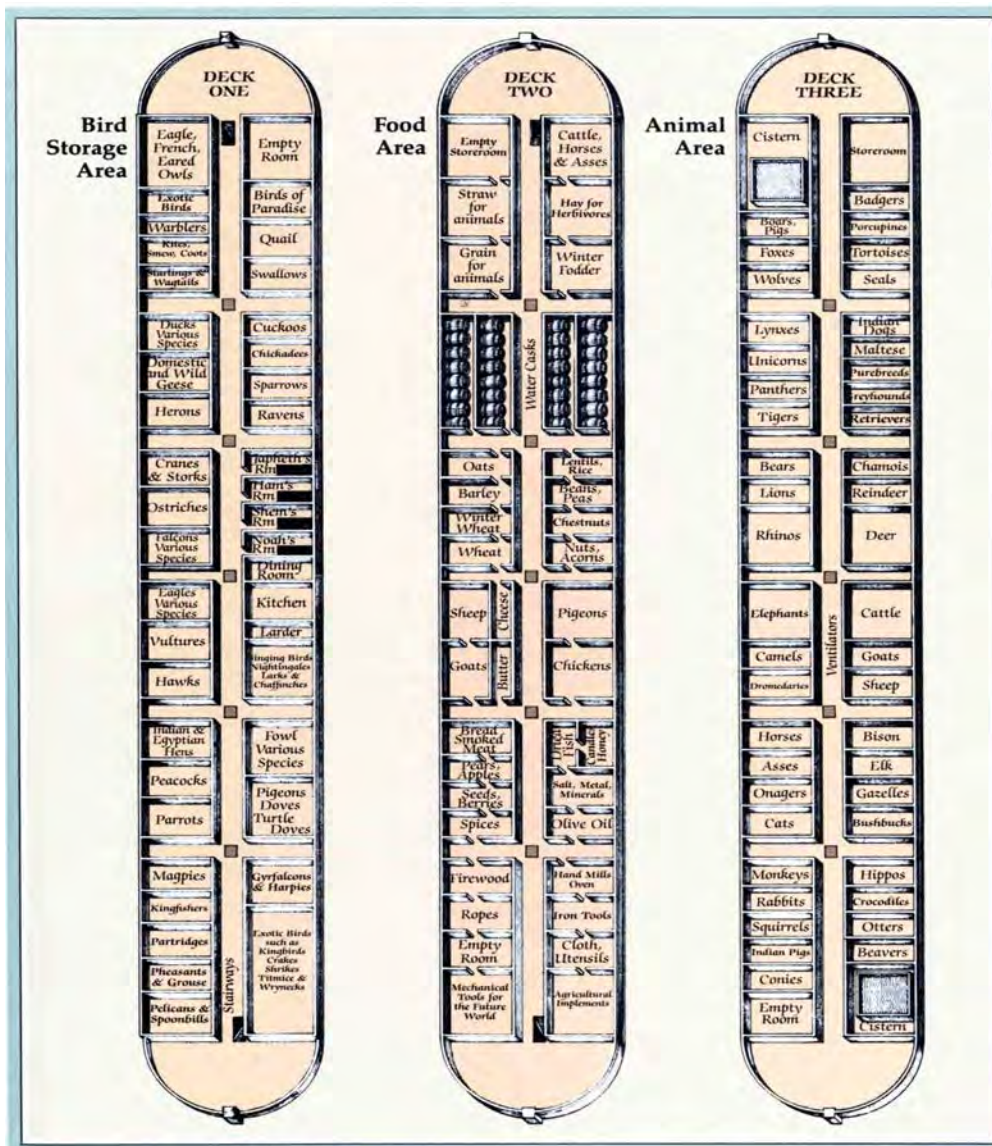
***“Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top.”*** - The NIV translates the Hebrew noun *“sohar”* as *“roof.”* The word is unusual. In fact, this is its only occurrence in the Old Testament. Scholars speculate that in this instance the text does not use the more typical word for *“roof”* because that term usually refers to a flat roof. The roof of the Ark needed to be pitched or vaulted to facilitate the run off of the torrential rains and the massive waves which would break over the top of the vessel. The Hebrew text is also obscure in the following phrase - ***“and finish the ark within 18 inches of the top.”*** Most interpreters take the phrase as a reference to a one cubit opening for ventilation and light all the way around the sides of the Ark, under the overhanging eaves of the roof.



***“The Construction of the Ark” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Engraving***

**“Put a door in the side of the ark.”** - The text simply indicates that a means of entry was provided.. It gives no information as to its size or its placement. The Lord Himself will close the great door from the outside after Noah and his passengers have entered the Ark (cf. Genesis 7:15-16).

**“And make lower, middle, and upper decks.”** - The interior space was divided into three levels or decks. Each deck would have been about 14 feet high. Men’s imaginations have run wild over the years, attempting to picture the internal arrangements of the ark. The 17<sup>th</sup> century, Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher went so far as to identify individual compartment for every species he could think of - including unicorns in a tidy diagram of the ark’s three decks.



**“Accommodations on the Ark” by Athanasius Kircher**

## *Excursus: Flood Traditions Outside of the Bible*

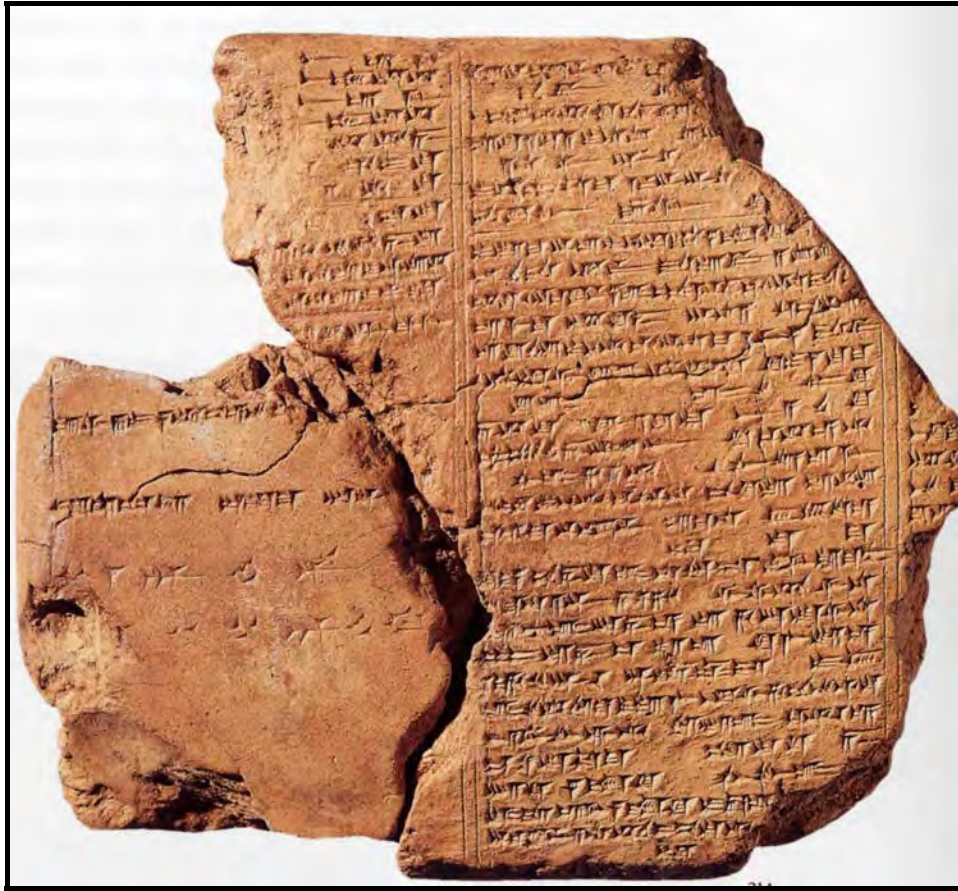


*“Gilgamesh” - Assyrian Palace Relief*

In 1872, British archeologist George Smith discovered a series of twelve cunieform tablets written in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. and stored in the palace library of the Assyrian King Assurbanipal in the royal capital at Nineveh. The material on these tablets, now known as “*The Gilgamesh Epic*,” tells of the exploits of an early Sumerian hero by that name. What makes this ancient tale uniquely significant is that in the course of his adventures, Gilgamesh encounters an old man named Utnapishtim, who relates the story of a great world Flood, sent by the angry gods to punish and destroy humanity. Utnapishtim was the Babylonian Noah, and his narrative of the Flood parallels the Genesis account in virtually every detail with wildly imaginative pagan embellishment. Utnapishtim was warned by the god Ea of the impending flood and instructed to build an ark for the preservation of his family and plant and animal species. When the flood waters receded, the ark landed on a mountaintop and Utnapishtim sent a series of birds, a dove, a swallow, and a raven, forth from the ark to make sure the land was dry. Smith’s discovery created such a stir, as the first independent verification of the Biblical Flood narrative that the scholar was sent back to Assyria three times to search the ruins of

Nineveh for additional fragments of the Gilgamesh tablets. In fact, George Smith died in Nineveh during his final expedition. The remarkable similarity between Gilgamesh and Genesis can be seen from the quotation of the brief segment which describes Utnapishtim’s actions after the ark had safely grounded on the mountain top:





*“The Epic of Gilgamesh - Tablet VI” from the Library of Assurbanipal*

*“I looked at the weather; stillness had set in,  
and all of mankind had returned to clay.  
The landscape was as level as a flat roof.  
I opened a hatch, and light fell upon my face.*

*I looked about for coastlines in the expanse of the sea; bowing low I sat and wept...*

*When the seventh day arrived, I sent forth and set free a dove;*

*The dove went forth but came back;*

*since no resting place for it was visible, she turned round.*

*Then I sent forth and set free a swallow. The swallow went forth but came back.*

*Since no resting place for it was visible, she turned round.*

*Then I sent forth and set free a raven.*

*The raven went forth and, seeing the waters had diminished,*

*He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round. (John Gray, p. 50)*

The “*Gilgamesh Epic*” is merely the best known of hundreds of flood traditions preserved by ancient cultures all across the world. In response to this plethora of

documentary evidence, 19<sup>th</sup> Century British geologist Hugh Miller concludes:

*“The destruction of well nigh the whole human race, in an early age of the world’s history, by a great deluge, appears to have so impressed the minds of the few survivors, and seems to have been handed down to their children, in consequence, with such terror-struck impressiveness, that their remote descendants of the present day have not even yet forgotten it. It appears in almost every mythology and lives even in the most distant countries, and among the most barbarous tribes.”* (Rehwinkel, p. 130)

The great naturalist Alexander von Humbolt summarizes the result of his study of hundreds of primitive cultures and tribes across the globe with these well chosen words:

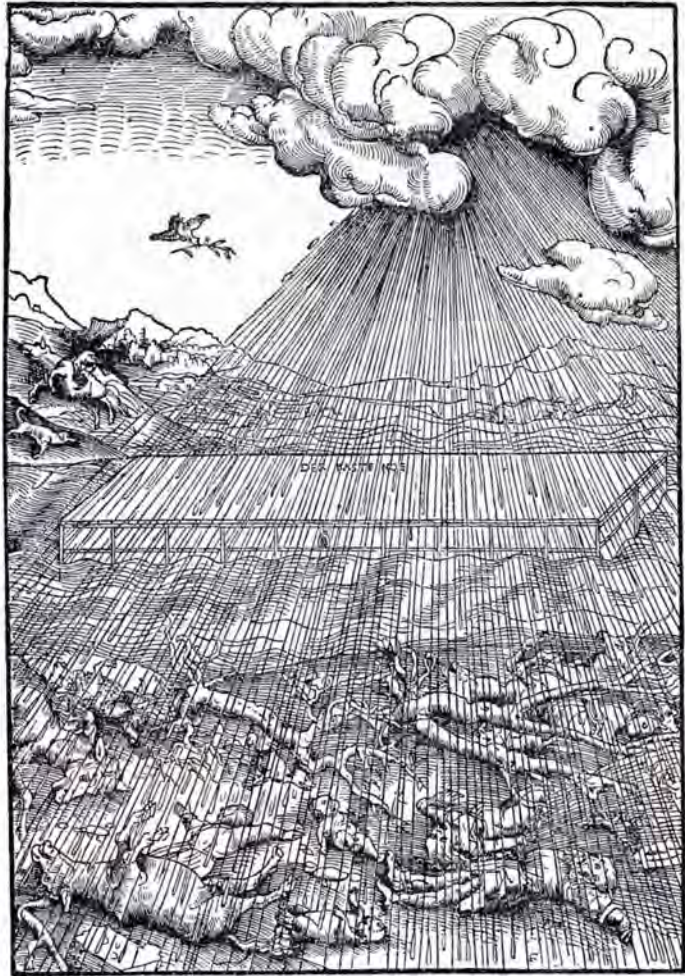
*“Those ancient traditions of the human race which we find dispersed over the whole surface of the globe, like the relics of a vast shipwreck, are highly interesting in the philosophical study of our own species. How many different tongues, belonging to branches that appear totally distinct transmit to us the same facts! The traditions concerning races that have been destroyed and the renewal of nature, scarcely vary in reality, though every nation gives them a local coloring. In the great continents, as in the smallest islands of the Pacific Ocean, it is always on the loftiest and nearest mountain that the remnants of the human race have been saved; and this event appears the more recent in proportion as the nations are uncultivated, and as the knowledge they have of their own existence has no very remote date.”* (Rehwinkel, p. 136)

There is, of course, considerable variety among the hundreds of flood traditions across the globe. But at the same time, there is a startling degree of similarity. In 88% of them there is a favor family which is preserved from destruction. In 70% of them, the survival is the result of a specially constructed craft. Almost without exception, 95% of these world-wide traditions that the nature of the physical catastrophe is a flood. 66% of the stories indicate that the disaster comes about as divine punishment for human sin. 67% report the preservation of animal species along with man aboard this special vessel. The inescapable conclusion of these similarities is that all of these traditions came originally from a common source - one actual historical event.

**Verse 17**

***I am going to bring flood waters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.***

***“I am going to bring flood waters on the earth...”*** No doubt, Noah had listened incredulously as the massive specifications of the vessel he was to build were outlined. His worst fears are now realized as the Lord makes the urgent necessity for the ark brutally clear. For the first time, the method of His judgment upon corrupt mankind is specifically introduced. The Hebrew text repeats the first person personal pronoun at the beginning of the phrase - literally ***“I Myself”*** - to emphasize that God alone is the author of the impending destruction. This will be neither a natural catastrophe nor a coincidence



***“The Flood” - Woodcut from Luther’s 1523 Bible***

of nature, but a deliberate act of total judgment by the Creator God. The text utilizes a unique Hebrew noun - ***“mabbul”*** - to describe the Flood. Outside of the Flood narrative, this technical term is used only in Psalm 29:10 - ***“The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever.”*** The word occurs with the definite article to indicate a single, well-known event - ***“the Flood.”*** It is derived from a root word which means ***“to destroy.”*** In this phrase, the noun is combined with the more general term ***“waters”*** to indicate the exact means of destruction.

***“to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.”*** - The threefold repetition of the text emphasizes the totality of the coming destruction. This will not be a limited or local event. God, the Giver of Life, intends to take back that which He has given. The text deliberately echoes the language of Genesis 1 to make that point. The worldwide scope of God’s

judgment is unmistakably indicated.

### **Verse 18**

***But I will establish My covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons wives with you.***

***“But I will establish My covenant with you....”*** - God’s gracious promise to Noah stands in striking contrast to the grim fate which awaits the rest of mankind. This is the first appearance of one of the most important theological words in Scripture - ***“covenant”*** (Hebrew - *“berith”*). Lutheran theologian Paul Bretscher Sr. argues that the covenant concept is fundamental to God’s dealings with men and establishes the unity between the Old and New Testaments:

*“The God of the Bible is a covenant God - a God who does not stay far away from men with a spirit of disinterest and unconcern, but who, out of His own self-contained initiative, showers them with promises of His grace, comes close and talks to them, forgives their sins and makes them His own. Two hundred and seventy-five times in the Bible, reference is made to the covenant of God with man.”* (Bretscher, CTM. XXV, pp. 2-3)

A great deal of study has been devoted to the covenant concept in Scripture and its parallels in other Near Eastern literature. Dr. Walter Roehrs offers these helpful observations on the uniqueness of God’s covenant with man as it presented in the Bible:

*“God’s deeds of grace in the Old Testament can very well be put into the framework of one word: the covenant. Through the covenant, God again established contact with man after man had excluded himself from communion with Him by sin and thus was subject to death...We need to remember again, at this point, that the covenant established a relationship of grace. The covenant could come into existence only because God is gracious. He alone took, and only could take, the initiative in bringing about this rapprochement. The covenant is not a bargained agreement between two equals: the party of the first and the party of the second. We never read, therefore, that God and man*

*established a covenant, but always that God made a covenant with man. Although the covenant is an event in history, it is an allegorical term to the extent that it expresses in human concepts how God healed the breach that divides man and Him, and lays down the terms on the basis of which communion with God can be renewed. The foundation upon which rests the whole structure of this new father-son relationship is the gracious condescension of the holy God. He contracted, purely out of fatherly divine goodness and mercy; it was unmotivated love. There was nothing in man to call forth a response of love in God. As a sinner, man was the very opposite of what God loved. And yet, God bent down to lift this ugly, putrid creature from his destruction and make him beautiful in his sonship. The term covenant, therefore, when pressed, is not adequate to describe the transaction between God and man if we think of it merely in human terms.” (Roehrs, p. 23)*



*“The Ark of Noah” - by Johann Teufel  
Luther Bible Woodcut - 1560*

The phrase typically used in Scripture to describe the formation of a covenant is somewhat unusual. The Hebrew idiom is “*kerit berith*” which literally means “*to cut a covenant.*” The language is derived from the customary ratification ceremony which accompanied the establishment of a covenant in the ancient Near East. In the

ritual a series of sacrificial animals would literally be cut in half and the parties to the agreement would then pass between their severed carcasses, thereby symbolically indicating to the gods to whom the sacrifices had been offered, “*May what happened to these creatures happen to me if I violate the terms of this agreement.*” We see this ancient ritual reflected in the text of Genesis 15:1-21, where God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham. The text here in Genesis 6 does not use the ordinary language for the establishment of a new covenant. The verb in this instance might best be translated “*confirm*” thus indicating that the covenant between God and Noah was a long standing agreement. Luther emphasizes the importance of a renewal of the covenant at this critical moment:

*“The text speaks of the spiritual covenant, or of the promise of the Seed who would crush the head of the serpent...God confirms this covenant for Noah, that he may firmly believe that Christ will be born from his descendants and that God, in His great wrath, will let a seedbed of the church remain...The confirmation of this covenant was needed very much, for the unbelievable and incalculable wrath of God was near at hand.”* (Martin Luther, AE, 2, pp. 71-72)

***“You will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.”*** - This phrase, describing Noah’s family, runs like a refrain throughout the Flood narrative emphasizing that through this righteous man a posterity for the entire human race is established and preserved (cf. Genesis 7:7; 8:16;,18). In this way, God provides for the survival of the human species. The text indicates exactly who is to be included so that there may be no uncertainty.

### ***Verses 19-21***

***You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal, and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come with you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.***

***“You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures...”*** - God’s concern for the survival of a remnant also extends to the species of the animal world. Thus, careful instructions are given, and later expanded (cf. Genesis 7:2-3) for the inclusion of

breeding pairs of each animal species among the passengers of the ark. Once again, the text emphasizes the nature of the Flood as the undoing of creation by using language clearly reminiscent of Genesis 1 ( *“male and female”* -Genesis 1:27; *“of every kind”* - Genesis 1: 11, 12, 21, 24,25; *“bird, animal, creature that moves along the ground”* - Genesis 1:20-24) in its roll call of the animal kingdom to be included among the passengers on the ark. Skeptics and Bible-doubters of every era have ridiculed the prospect of Noah’s frantic efforts to collect and capture all of these animals. In their eagerness to seem wiser than God, these critics fail to note the specific indication of the text that God Himself would bring the animals to the ark - *“Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.”* The gathering of the animals was not Noah’s problem. The Creator who fashioned all animal life, and who in His providence continues to instill in many species incredibly compelling migratory instincts to this very day, assumed for Himself the responsibility of bringing the animals to the ark.



*“The Animals Enter the Ark” by Leander Bassan - 1620*

Those who confidently assert the impossibility of animals from all over the world traveling great distances to assemble in one location, fail to consider the dramatic changes in global topography brought about by the Flood itself. Dr. Henry Morris

points out a number of the fallacies of this approach:

*“An equally serious fault in this kind of thinking is that it begs the question of the extent and effects of the deluge. It assumes, for example, that climatic zones were exactly the same before the Flood as they are now, that animals inhabited the same areas of the world as they do now, and that the geography and topography of the earth continued unchanged. But on the assumption of a universal Deluge, all of these conditions would have been profoundly altered. Arctic and desert zones may never have existed before the Flood; nor the great intercontinental barriers of high mountain ranges, impenetrable jungles, and open seas (as between Australia and Southeast Asia, and between Siberia and Alaska). On this basis, it is quite probable that animals were more widely distributed than they are now, with representatives of each created kind of land animal living in that part of the earth where Noah was building the ark.”* (Morris, p. 186)

The capability of the ark to accommodate that tremendous numbers of animals has been widely discussed. It is most important at the outset to recognize the massive capacity of a vessel with the dimensions outlined in the Biblical text. If, as previously noted, we make the conservative assumption that a cubit equals eighteen inches, then the ark had the cubic capacity of 1,500,000 cubic feet. That is roughly the equivalent of 522 railroad freight cars. If we extend the length of the cubit to twenty-four inches, also well within the realm of possibility, then the ark’s capacity increases to the equivalent of 1,000 freight cars. In any case, assuming the accuracy of the dimensions given in the Biblical text, there was room in the ark for a great many animals.

But how many animals did the ark need to carry? The text says that the animals were preserved in the ark according to their **“kind”** (Hebrew - *“min”*). This key term comes from the creation account of Genesis 1 (cf. notes on Genesis 1:11). Although the Biblical word **“kind”** bears no direct **correlation** to the taxonomic classification system of contemporary biology, it is roughly equivalent to the modern category *“species.”* Dr. John Klotz notes:

*“‘Species’ and ‘kind’ are not to be regarded as exact synonyms. There can be no evolution from kind to kind, but there can, very rarely, be the development of one species from another. In most cases, ‘kind’ and ‘species’ can be regarded as synonyms but they are not exact*



*equivalents.*” (Klotz, p. 150)

Hundreds of distinct varieties can exist within a “*kind*,” for example, breeds of dogs, horses, pigeons, etc. But in order to preserve that species, only one pair would be necessary on the ark, for that single pair would contain the genetic material necessary for the re-introduction of all the others. Most modern biologists agree that there are



*“The Building of the Ark: by Gustav Dore*

approximately 1,000,000 different animal species on earth today. Ernst Mayr, one leading taxonomist lists them as follows: mammals - 3,500; birds - 8,600; reptiles and amphibians - 5,500; fishes - 18,000; tunicates (marine invertebrates like the sea squirt) - 1,700; echinoderms (marine creatures like starfish and sea urchins) - 4,700; arthropods (lobsters, shrimps, crabs, and insects) - 815,000; mollusks - 88,000; worms - 25,000; coelenterates (jelly fish and corals) - 10,000; sponges - 5,000; protozoans - 15,000. When you remove from this list all of the species capable of surviving in the water, along with the hundreds of thousands of tiny insects, the space problem on the ark vanishes. We are left with no more than 35,000 individual animal species. It seems reasonable to further assume that in the case of very large animals (i.e. dinosaurs, elephants, etc.) immature, smaller specimens were taken to conserve space. Rehwinkel observes:

*“It has been estimated that land animals above the size of a sheep at the present time number about 290; those from sheep to rats, 757, and those smaller than rats 1,359. The average size is about that of a house cat,*

*a pair of which would require less than two square feet of space.”*  
(Rehwinkel, p.69)

Given these numbers and size parameters, the interior space available on the ark would have been more than adequate for the task for which it was designed by God.

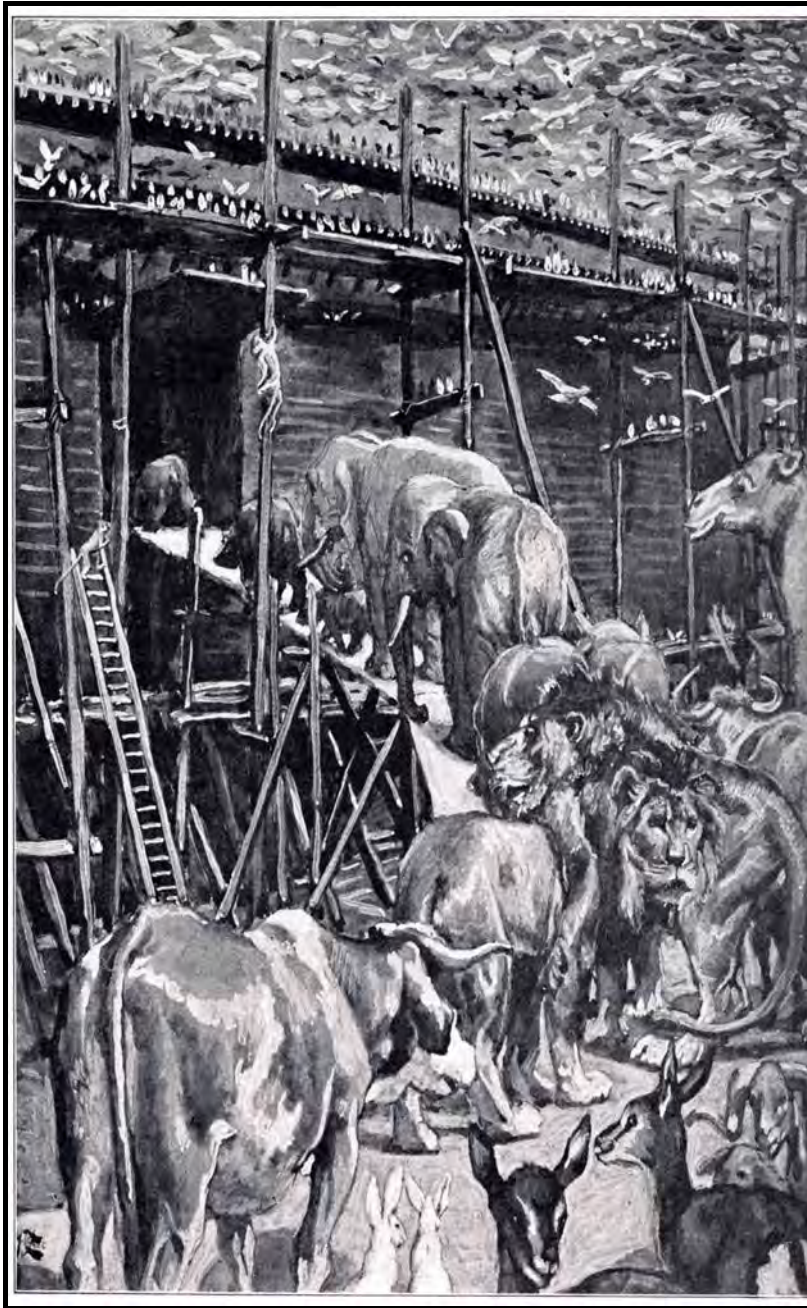
***“You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.”*** - Noah is carefully instructed to make the necessary provisions for the survival of his family and his passengers. Again the skeptics scoff: *“The care and feeding of tens of thousands of animals and the removal of the manure they would produce is beyond the capacity of the eight people aboard the ark.”* It is incredible how little man in his arrogance refuses to acknowledge the power of God. God has provided animals in the natural world with the ability to become dormant during periods of extreme cold (*“hibernation”*) or periods of extreme heat and drought (*“evistation”*). It would seem reasonable to assume that most of the animals on the ark entered such a state of dormancy during their time on the ark, thereby making the need for food and the removal of waste superfluous. The animal provisions mentioned in this verse may well refer to supplies that would be needed after the animals left the ark and had to survive in the midst of the devastation caused by the slowly receding flood waters.

## ***Verse 22***

***Noah did everything just as God commanded him.***

***“Noah did everything...”*** - Luther contends that this remarkable submission to the will and Word of God, expressed in consistent obedience to the divine command, is the most basic characteristic of a living faith relationship with God. To walk the *“royal road”* of unconditional obedience to God’s Word without addition or alteration, the Reformer asserts is a rare and a remarkable thing:

*“Noah is praised as an example for us because he did not have dead faith, which is actually no faith at all, but a living, active faith. He is obedient when God gives him a command; and because he believes God, both when He gives a promise and when He utters a threat, he painstakingly carries out God’s direction in regard to the ark, the gathering of the animals, and the food. The particular praise of Noah’s faith is that he stays on the royal road; he adds nothing, changes nothing, but abides completely by the command he hears. The most*



*“The Animals Entering the Ark” by J. James Tissot*

*sound is concerned, but in practice and performance it is familiar to few and very difficult.” (Martin Luther, AE, 2, p. 80)*

*common and at the same time the most pernicious plague in the Church is this; either a change is made in what God has commanded, or something is superimposed upon what God has commanded...In this passage Moses fittingly praises Noah’s obedience when he states that Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him. This is giving glory to God for His wisdom and goodness. He did not argue about the task - as Adam, Eve, and Saul did to their great misfortune. He complied with the majesty of Him who gave the command; this was sufficient for him even though he was commanded to do things that were preposterous, impossible, and inconvenient. He passes by all these offenses as if with closed eyes, and relies on this one fact, that it was God who had given him the command. And so this is a familiar text so far as its*

# Genesis Chapter 7

## The Great Flood



*“The Deluge” by Gustav Dore’*

### *Verse 1*

*The Lord then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.”*

*“The Lord then said to Noah...”* - The time for preparation and planning is now over and the moment of judgment is finally at hand. The building of the ark has been completed. As the previous segment of the story had begun with the divine command to build the ark, so now the next segment begins with the divine command to enter the

ark. God is the initiator throughout the narrative. The command to enter the ark is given seven days before the beginning of the Flood (cf. vs. 4). Since the Flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month of the Hebrew calendar, the month of “*Marheshvan*” - which corresponds roughly to our mid- October thru mid-November - this word from God to Noah would have occurred on the tenth day of that second month. It is the gracious God of the covenant, “*Jahweh*” who now addresses Noah. The wording of God’s command parallels God’s previous communication with Noah (cf. Genesis 6:13-21) and His subsequent command to come forth from the ark after the Flood (cf. Genesis 8:16-17). The Lord addresses Noah directly and personally as indicated by the prominence of the second person personal pronoun in the text - “***You and your whole family...I have found you...take with you.***”

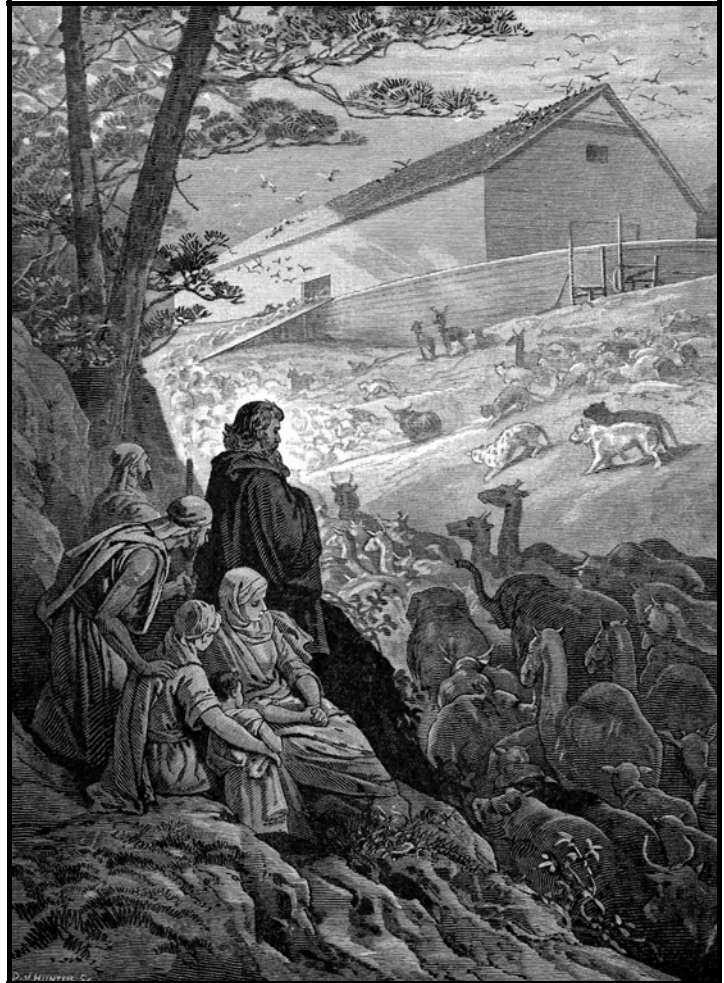
The righteousness of Noah in relation to the sinful world of his day is emphatically reiterated as the basis for his deliverance from the destruction of the Flood - “***Because I have found you righteous in this generation.***” The account of Noah had been introduced with a similar assertion in Chapter 6: “***Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.***” (Genesis 6:9) Once again, the text uses the crucial Hebrew term “*tsaddiq*” in reference to Noah. This is the characteristic Old Testament term to describe forensic justification by grace through faith. As previously noted, Noah was not chosen because he was righteous; he was righteous because he was chosen (for a more detailed description of the meaning of this very important word cf. pp. 381 ff.). That righteousness was all the more remarkable, Martin Luther notes, in that Noah lived in a world where “*the light of the Word had been put out.*” Noah did not enjoy the benefit of the objective means of grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, which is God’s gift to the church today: “*It is dreadful to live in such an evil and ungodly world. Since we have the light of the Word, this present time, by the grace of God, is still a golden age. The sacraments are properly administered in our churches and godly clergymen disseminate the Word in its purity.*” (Luther, AE, II, p. 84) The individual emphasis upon Noah has led commentators to speculate over the spiritual condition of the various members of Noah’s family, particularly in view of the subsequent difficulties experienced with Ham (cf. Genesis 9:22). While the issue is not specifically addressed in this text or elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that Noah’s sons and their families would have consented to enter the ark with him in the face of the scorn and rejection of the entire world, unless they themselves shared his faith in the Word and command of God. There can be little doubt that the great faith of the patriarch had a profound impact within his own household. Dr. Leupold notes:

*“The blessing that may grow out of the godly conduct of an individual may, indeed, redound to the good of others who are associated with him...we have every reason to assume that the father’s influence affected the personal attitude of the members of his household to Yahweh, so that of their own volition they chose to walk in the godly patriarch’s footsteps. Yet had Noah not stood firm, they themselves would soon have wavered.” (Leupold, I, p. 288)*

### **Verses 2-3**

***“Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.”***

***“Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal...”*** - God’s original instruction to bring ***“two of all living creatures to keep them alive with you”*** (Genesis 6:19) is now detailed and amplified with the introduction of the distinction between ***“clean”*** and ***“unclean”*** animals. These categories would later be formally defined in the Mosaic codes of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in the context of the dietary habits of the people (cf. Leviticus 11:1-47; Deuteronomy 14:3-21). It is evident from the language of the text here that these distinctions long predated the regulations of the Torah and were already familiar concepts in the pre-flood world of Noah. They are cited here without explanation or introduction as categories with



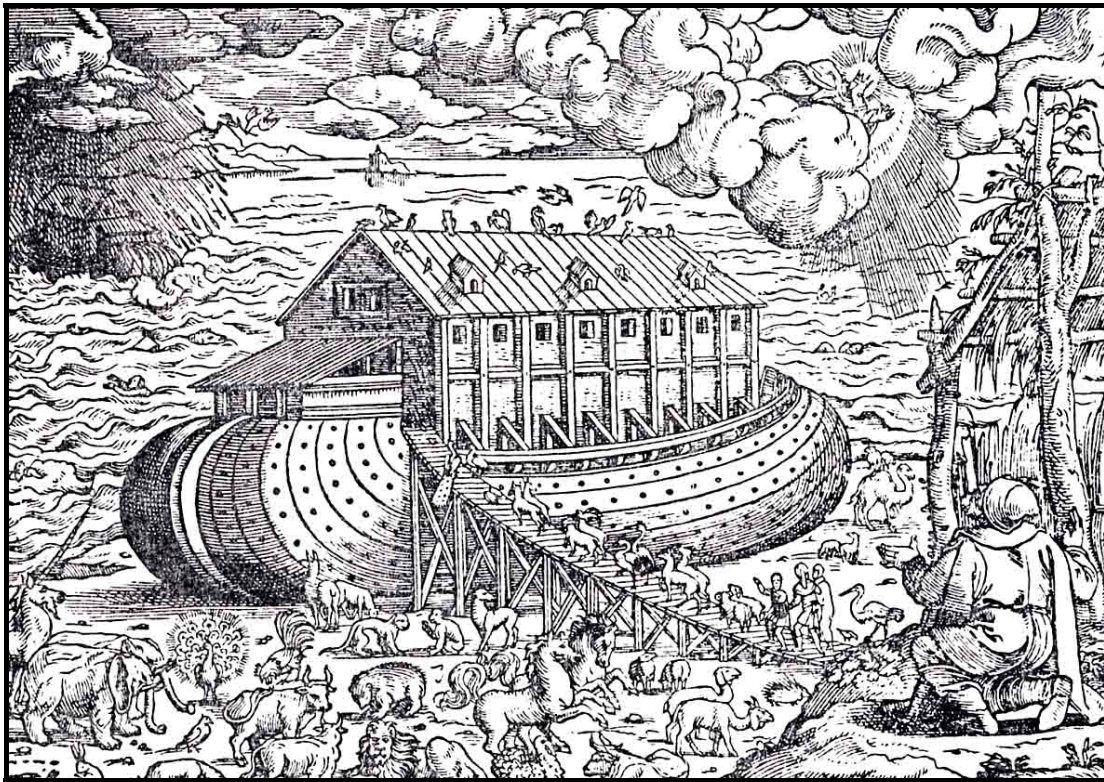
***“The Gathering of the Beasts”  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration***

which the people of Noah's day were already fully acquainted. The concern in this instance is not dietary. Prior to the Flood godly men were vegetarians (cf. Genesis 1:29) although it would seem that many of the godless descendants of Cain had already begun to indulge a taste for meat prior to the divine authorization. Here the distinction pertains to animals for sacrifice. The provision for addition "**clean animals**" is designed to facilitate the offering of sacrifices after the Flood. This concern is further indicated by the specific insistence of the text that seven male-female pairs of each clean animal be included on the ark - literally "*seven pairs, males and their mates.*"

The basis or rationale for the distinction between clean and unclean animals has been widely debated since ancient times. The pertinent texts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy carefully define the animals which fall into each category but do not explain the basis for the distinction. G. J. Wenham convincingly argues on behalf of a symbolic interpretation which "*views the behavior and habits of the clean animals as living illustrations of how the righteous Israelite ought to behave, while the unclean represent sinful men.*" (Wenham, p. 168) He contends that a comprehensive study of the regulations in Leviticus reveals that the underlying concept of the distinction between clean and unclean animals was "*wholeness and normality.*"

*"The animal world is divided into three spheres; those that fly in the air, those that walk on the land, and those that swim in the seas (cf. Genesis 1:20-30). Each sphere has a particular mode of motion associated with it. Birds have two wings with which to fly, and two feet for walking; fish have fins and scales with which to swim; land animals have hooves to run with. The clean animals are those that conform to these standard pure types. Those creatures which in some way transgress the boundaries are unclean. Thus fish without fins and scales are unclean (Lev. 11:10; Deu. 14:10). Insects which fly, but which have many legs are unclean, whereas locusts which have wings and two hopping legs are clean (Lev. 11:20-23). Animals with indeterminate form of motion, i.e. which 'swarm,' are unclean (Lev. 11:41-44). Holiness requires that individuals conform to the class to which they belong. Insofar as some animals do not conform, they are unclean...There was a system underlying the uncleanness regulations and their symbolism was consciously felt in ancient Israel. They expressed and understanding of holiness, and of Israel's special status as the holy people of God. The division of clean (edible) foods and unclean (inedible) foods*

*corresponded to the division between holy Israel and the Gentile world. Among those animals which were clean there were a few types that could be offered in sacrifice. Similarly, there was a group of men within Israel which could offer sacrifice, namely, the priests. Through this system of symbolic laws, the Israelites were reminded at every meal of their redemption to be God's people. Their diet was limited to certain meats in imitation of their God, who had restricted His choice among the nations to Israel. It served, too, to bring to mind Israel's responsibilities to be a holy nation. As they distinguished between clean and unclean foods, they were reminded that holiness was more than a matter of meat and drink but a way of life characterized by purity and integrity.”*  
(Wenham, p. 170)



*“The Entry Into the Ark” 17<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Illustration*

*“And also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.”* - The specific inclusion of seven pairs of birds, both clean and unclean, among the animals aboard the ark is linked to the survival of their various species. It may be that birds were viewed as having a higher mortality rate which necessitated a greater number at the outset to maintain the viability of each individual species.



#### **Verse 4**

***“Seven days from now I will send rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”***

***“Seven days from now...”*** - The Lord now discloses the imminence of His impending judgment upon mankind and the world. Most translations introduce these words with the connecting preposition *“For”* which links this information to what precedes as an explanation. For example, Hebrew scholar Nahum Sarna renders the opening phrase - *“For in seven days time...”* The Genesis account of the world Flood revolves around the numbers ***“seven”*** and ***“forty.”*** Among the Old Testament people of God seven consecutive days were regarded as the perfect unit of time during which any important work could develop and be completed. This view was derived, of course, from the seven days of the creation week (Genesis 1:1- 2:4). The perfect seven has already appeared in the numbers of clean animals and birds to be included among the ark’s passengers. Seven will recur again in the later dispatching of the birds from the ark (cf. Genesis 8:10, 12). The number forty also figures prominently in the narratives of the Old Testament. Nahum Sarna suggests that the number forty in the Old Testament is linked to the concept of purification and atonement for sin and cites an impressive array of parallels in support of that assertion:

*“Compare Moses’ forty days on Sinai in preparation for receiving both editions of the Decalogue, Exodus 24:18; Deuteronomy 9:11; 10:10; and his forty days of supplication to atone for the sin of Israel through the golden calf, Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:18-25; Israel’s forty years of wandering in the wilderness for the sin in connection with the spies, who had taken forty days to explore the land, Numbers 13:25; 14:33; Joshua 5:6; Psalm 95:10; cf. Exodus 16:35; Elijah journeys forty days in the wilderness to Horeb where he receives a revelation, 1 Kings 19:8; Ezekiel lies on his right side for forty days in atonement for the sin of Judah, Ezekiel 4:6; the same prophet sees the desolation of Egypt lasting forty years, 29:11-13.”* (Sarna, p. 356)

A similar pattern prevails in the New Testament where Jesus fasts in the wilderness prior to His temptation by the devil for forty days (Matthew 4:2) and the resurrected Christ appears to His disciples for forty days until His triumphant ascension into heaven (Acts 1:3). This consistent signification originates in and in every instance echoes back to the forty days of rain which brought about the great Flood, and through

which God cleansed the earth and preserved His faithful remnant.

The text emphasizes the incessant nature of the downpour with the repetitive phrase *“forty days and forty nights.”* Once the rain begins there will be no let-up whatsoever until the entire surface of the earth has been submerged beneath the relentlessly rising water. This realistic duration is in striking contrast to the Sumerian *“Gilgamesh Epic”* which indicates that the flood causing rain lasted only for seven days.



*“And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”  
17<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Engraving*

*“And I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature that I have made.”* - As in the preceding phrase (*“I will send rain on the earth”*) the prominence of the first person personal pronoun reveals the nature of what is to come as the personal judgment of an almighty Lord. The absolute transcendent character of the one God who is sovereign over all things as the Creator of the entire natural world is decisively indicated. The text does not flinch from identifying God as the sole agent of the earth’s and mankind’s utter destruction. God alone has the power and authority to inflict this awful judgment because He alone is the Creator, the Source from which all things have come. *“God speaks with authority as one who has absolute and perfect*

*control of all issues involved.” (Leupold, p. 291)*

### ***Verse 5***

***And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.***

***“And Noah did...”*** - Noah’s response to these horrendous words is the simple, humble submission of faith. He does not question, or challenge, or doubt. He merely obeys. The Hebrew text stresses the comprehensive and complete nature of Noah’s obedience, literally - *“Noah did according to all the Lord commanded.”* Luther applauds the remarkable faithfulness of the patriarch: *“Surely, great was the faith of Noah, that he was able to believe these words of God. I would certainly not have believed them...Noah is an illustrious and grand example of faith. He withstood the opinions of the world with heroic steadfastness.”*(Luther, AE, II, p. 87)

### ***Verses 6-10***

***Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the Flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days, the floodwaters came on the earth.***

***“Noah was six hundred years old...”*** - Moses sets the stage for the entry into the ark and beginning of the Flood by noting Noah’s age - ***“six hundred years”*** -at this crucial moment. The somber realism of the Torah is in glaring contrast to the fantastic exaggerations of other Near Eastern Flood accounts. The Sumerian hero Ziusudra, for instance, is 36.000 years old at the beginning of his Flood.

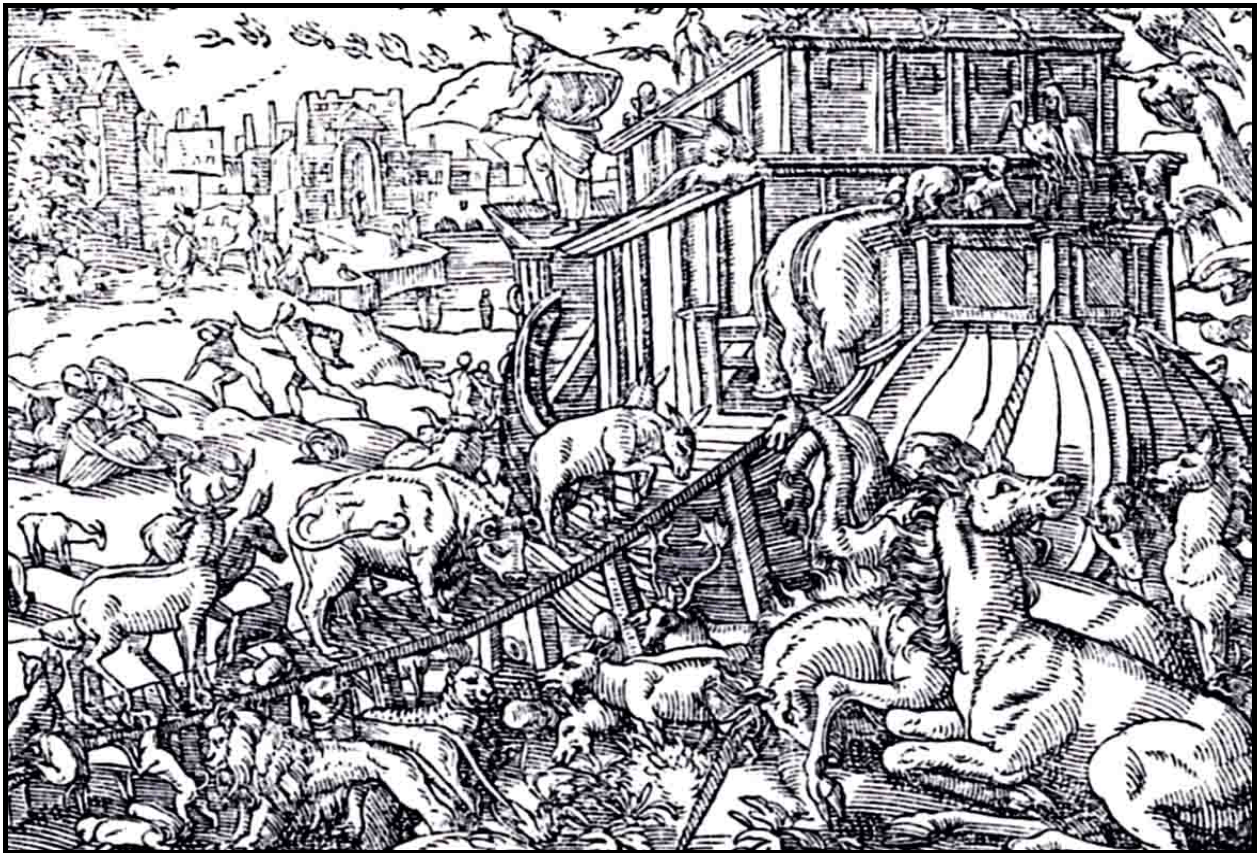
***“And Noah and his sons and his wife...”*** - The text suggests that, understandably, Noah and the members of his family waited until the last possible moment to enter the ark. That is not to say that they doubted the word of God and did not enter the ark until the rain had actually begun to fall - *“Noah had so little faith that he did not enter the ark until the waters had risen to his knees.”* (Ginzberg, I, p.159) Noah entered the ark on at the appointed time which God had specified in trusting obedience to His Word. The final seven days of which the Lord had spoken (cf. Genesis 7:4) have now

elapsed and the moment is at hand. There is a sense of high drama in the narrative. All of the required animals have gathered. The Bible makes it clear that Noah did not need to hunt them down and capture them but that they *“came to Noah”* on their own, at the instigation of God. Cassutto describes the text’s *“magnificent and graphic picture of the wondrous scene”* as a *“mass pilgrimage from all parts of the earth to that one place that promised salvation to every species of creature.”* (Cassutto, p. 80)

Sceptics, ancient and modern have scoffed at the prospect of representatives of every animal species on the face of the earth gathering in one place and an appointed time. To those who have such difficulty with the concept of God managing the details of His own creation it should be emphasized that conditions in the original world were very different than those which now prevail on earth. As previously noted, one temperate climate prevailed throughout the world beneath the shelter of the water canopy which then protected the outer edge of the earth’s atmosphere. The globe’s geography was also drastically different than current conditions, with one great land mass uninhibited by barriers of insurmountable mountains, impassible deserts, or surging seas. The original world had been created as the perfect environment for man who was intended to live forever in loving harmony with his Creator. Thus the wide dispersion and isolation of the various animal species across the drastically differing ecologies of the world today did not exist at the time of Noah. Much of the climatic adaption which has occurred among various animal species over the centuries may also have taken place in response to the dramatically changed circumstances of climate and geography since the Flood, thus allowing for the probability that animals were much more similar then that they are now. All of this would have facilitated a gathering of the animals which under current conditions would seem improbable and impossible.

The incredible migratory patterns of animals today on the land and in the sea and the air, enabling them to travel thousands of miles with the changing seasons or the availability of food, bear startling witness to the limitless wisdom of the Creator God. Among the most amazing illustrations of this incredible pattern is the homing instinct of the leatherback sea turtle, which can weigh up to 1,770 lbs. Mature turtles will travel thousands of miles from their feeding areas around the globe to return to the same place on the same beach where they themselves had been hatched decades earlier to lay their eggs. Fragile monarch butterflies and birds traverse continents each year. Sandhill Cranes, for example, fly 4,000miles annually from their breeding grounds in Alaska to their winter feeding areas in south Texas, while some European birds fly

even farther from northern Scandinavia to the southern tip of Africa. Fish and sea creatures travel even greater distances on ceaseless ocean currents. Marine biologists estimate that in the course of a lifetime the annual migrations of a gray whale will total up to 500,000 miles, more than twice the distance to the moon! Vast herds of wildebeests - including over 250,000 animals in herds 25 miles in length - travel hundreds of miles across the plains of central Africa in a pattern which has not varied in centuries. In light of these commonplace feats in the world of nature today, the gathering and subsequent dispersal of the animals for the ark does not seem to present any insurmountable difficulties. It should also be taken into consideration that the migratory movement of the animals for the ark may have occurred gradually in the course of the 120 years allotted for man's repentance prior to the Flood and could thus have included successive generations of animals.



*“The Entry Into the Ark” by Tobias Stimmer*

The gathering of the beasts before the ark has always been a favorite of Biblical illustrators and artists. Tobias Stimmer, a 16<sup>th</sup> century craftsman who provided woodcuts for the early editions of Luther's German Bible, depicts Noah standing high

upon the deck of the ark, his arms outstretched as the preacher of righteousness pronouncing the final warning and appeal to heedless mankind below engaged in its ordinary pursuit of love and war. As Noah preaches his message of Law and Gospel, the birds are streaming in from all across the sky and an endless parade of creatures wends its way up the gang plank into the vessel and safety. Only the capricious unicorn and its mate in the foreground refuse to join the procession and be saved, which, according the European tradition was the reason for the extinction of these mythical beasts. Fifty years later, popular Bible illustrator Matthäus Merian included the unicorns among his rescued creatures but presented Noah on his knees before God in fervent prayer as the clouds of judgment gather overhead. But once again, mankind is busy with other things, some dancing and playing in the background, and others battling with one another. Those who notice the wondrous spectacle at all only look on with scorn and bewilderment.



*“The Entry Into the Ark” by M. Merian*

*“And after the seven days, the floodwaters came on the earth.”* - Rabbinic tradition teaches that the seven day interval was a period of mourning for the death of Methuselah who died in the year of the Flood:

*“When Methuselah died, the people heard a great commotion in the heavens, and they saw nine hundred rows of mourners...and tears flowed from the eyes of the holy beings down upon the spot where he died. Seeing the grief of the celestials, the people on earth also mourned over the demise of Methuselah, and God rewarded them therefor. He added seven days to the time of grace which He had ordained before bringing destruction upon the earth by a flood of waters.”* (Ginzberg, I, pp. 141-142)

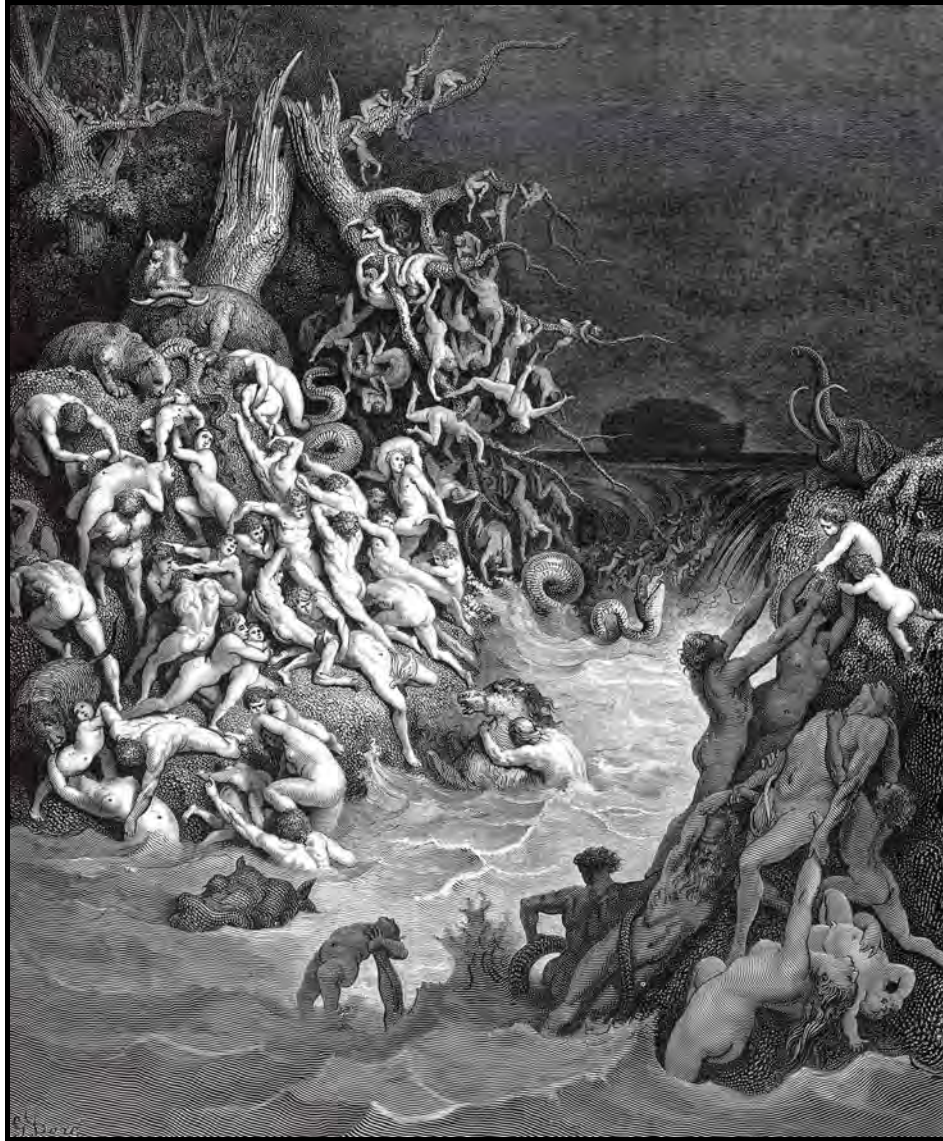
The Biblical text, of course, makes no such fanciful suggestion, but rather indicates that the seven days were the time allotted for the gathering of the animals within the ark.

### ***Verses 11-12***

***In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month - on that day the springs of the great deep burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.***

***“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life...”*** - The momentous significance of the event is demonstrated by the precise specificity with which it is dated to ***“the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month.”*** The evident concern of the author to accurately date the beginning of these events is also a compelling indication that this narrative is intended as history. This is obviously not intended to be understood as some sort of fictional epic, as many modern Bible critics would have us believe. *“For the author of Genesis the Flood event is as real as the birth of Abraham.”* (Matthews, p. 376)

If, as most scholars today believe, the ancient civil calendar of the Jews began in the Fall (cf. Exodus 23:16; 34:22) that would place the beginning of the Flood at the end of our month of October or the beginning of November. In his classic 1951 study *“The Flood,”* Dr. Alfred Rehwinkel observes that cultures ancient and modern from across the face of the globe - including among others, the Aborigines of Australia, the Incas of Peru, the Aztecs of Mexico, the Hindus of India, the ancient Egyptians and the Druids of primitive northern Europe - have all celebrated a festival of the dead at this time of year. The more recent Christian observance of All Saints and All Souls Days on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and All Hallows Eve on the night of October 31<sup>st</sup> are



*“Every Living Thing on the Face of the Earth Was Wiped Out”  
by Gustav Doré’*

based upon these primitive customs. Rehwinkel concludes that this is no mere coincidence but the indelible memory of the horrendous death and destruction of the great Flood seared into the consciousness of mankind:

*“All these traditions have in common a remembrance of the dead, which seems to point to a major calamity of the human race. Then there are echoes of a perishing world and the rebuilding of another. Customs and traditions found so widely scattered and with so many people must have their origin in some great common experience in the past history of man.*



*There is no common experience which would so well account for these strange customs and traditions as the Flood. And we may well agree with Urquhart, who in concluding his remarks on these traditions says: 'Here the traditions unite in not only bearing down to our own times that awful cry of anguish which once shook earth and sky, but also fix upon the very month and the very day which the Scriptures have recorded.'*" (Rehwinkel, "The Flood," p. 171)

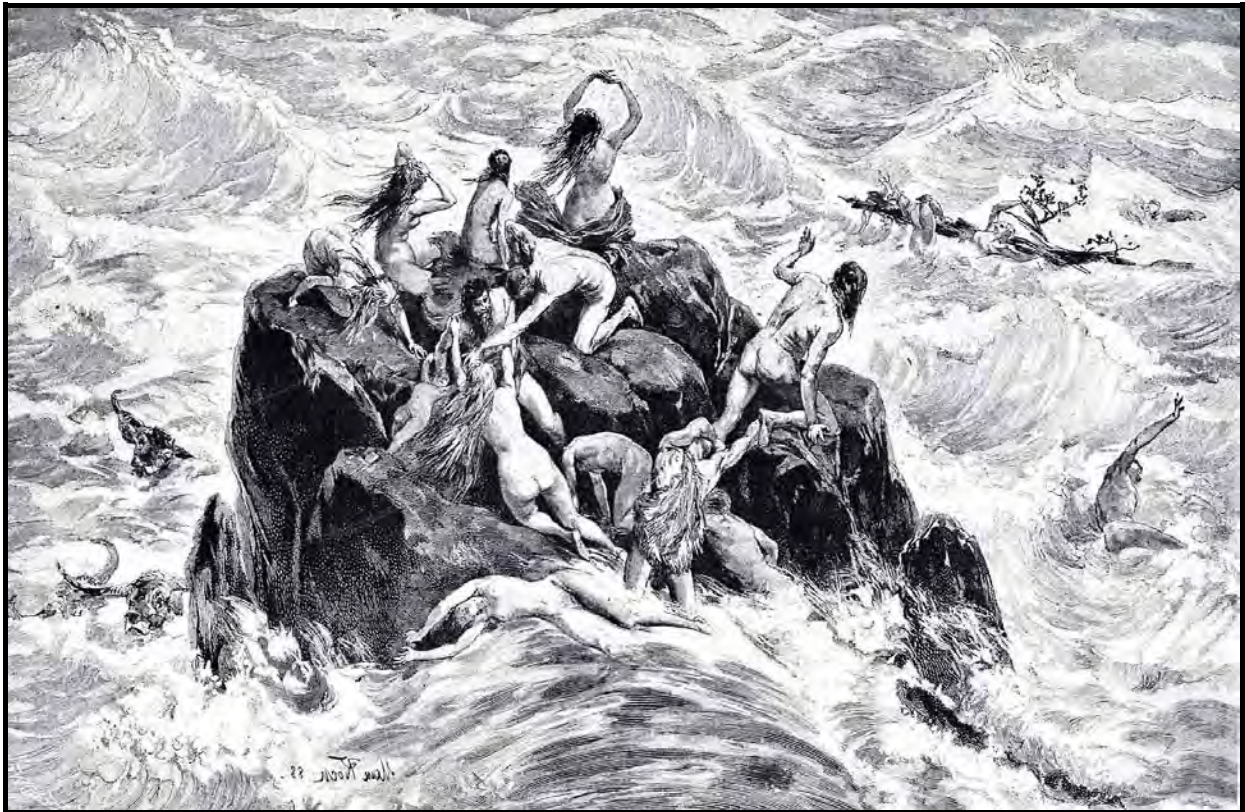
***"On that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened."*** - In the earlier creation account the systematic division of the water below and above the firmament (cf. Genesis 1:6-8) and the organization of the waters below with the emergence of the dry land (cf. Genesis 1: 9-10) are of central importance. This text deliberately uses the concepts of Genesis 1 to depict the Flood as the deliberate undoing and disordering of God's original work of creation. *"Now the Lord sets in motion the uncreation of the world by releasing the powers that always stand ready to overwhelm life. The waters once separated will now be rejoined for the purpose of destruction."* (Matthews, p. 376) The same reversal of creation language applied to the final judgment reverberates through the writings of the Old Testament prophets. The prophet Isaiah warns of cataclysmic destruction overtaking the entire universe:

***"The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls - never to rise again. In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below...The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the Lord Almighty will reign."*** (Isaiah 24:18-23)

Jeremiah foresees a day when beneath the stern judgment of God the earth will be returned to its original state of emptiness and disorder, a barren wasteland devoid of all life:

***"I looked at the earth and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens and their light was gone. I looked at the mountains and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked, and the fruitful***

*land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the Lord, before His fierce anger.” (Jeremiah 4:23-26)*



*“The Destruction of Mankind” by Max Koch - 1888*

Two primary sources are cited as providing the vast amounts of water necessary for God’s destructive purpose in the Flood - *“the springs of the great deep”* and *“the floodgates of the heavens.”* *“The great deep”* (Hebrew - *“rabba tehom”*) appears in Genesis 1 as the primordial water above which the Spirit of God hovered at the beginning of creation (cf. Genesis 1:2). It would appear that prior to the Flood the earth’s hydrological system was determined by the existence of vast subterranean aquifers. The great size and abundance of this water system were proverbial among the Hebrews. God declares to Job: *“Have your journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?”* (Job 38:16; cf. Also Proverbs 8:24) These vast springs provided a stable moderate water supply ideal for all forms of plant and animal life. Genesis 1 describes this ideal system in this way: *“The Lord God had not sent rain on the earth...but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.”* (Genesis 1:5-6) Henry Morris offers this intriguing

explanation of the ***“the springs of the great deep:”***

*“The waters below the firmament became what is referred to as ‘the great deep’ or ‘the great depths of water.’ This was water in the liquid state, visible to the first man especially in the form of the antediluvian seas and rivers. These rivers were not produced by run-off from rainfall, but emerged through controlled fountains or springs, evidently from deep seated sources in or below the earth’s crust...Such subterranean reservoirs were apparently all interconnected with each other, as well as with the surface seas into which the rivers drained, so that the entire complex constituted one ‘great deep.’ The energy for repressurizing and recycling the waters must have come from the earth’s own subterranean heat implanted there at creation.” (Morris, pp. 194-195)*

The text uses the verb ***“burst forth”*** (Hebrew - *“baqa”*) to describe the explosive rupture of this extensive subterranean water system. The term carries the clear connotation of violence and destruction in the movement of massive amounts of water. The psalmist uses the same verb in his dramatic description of creation as the restraint of the forces of chaos and disorder:

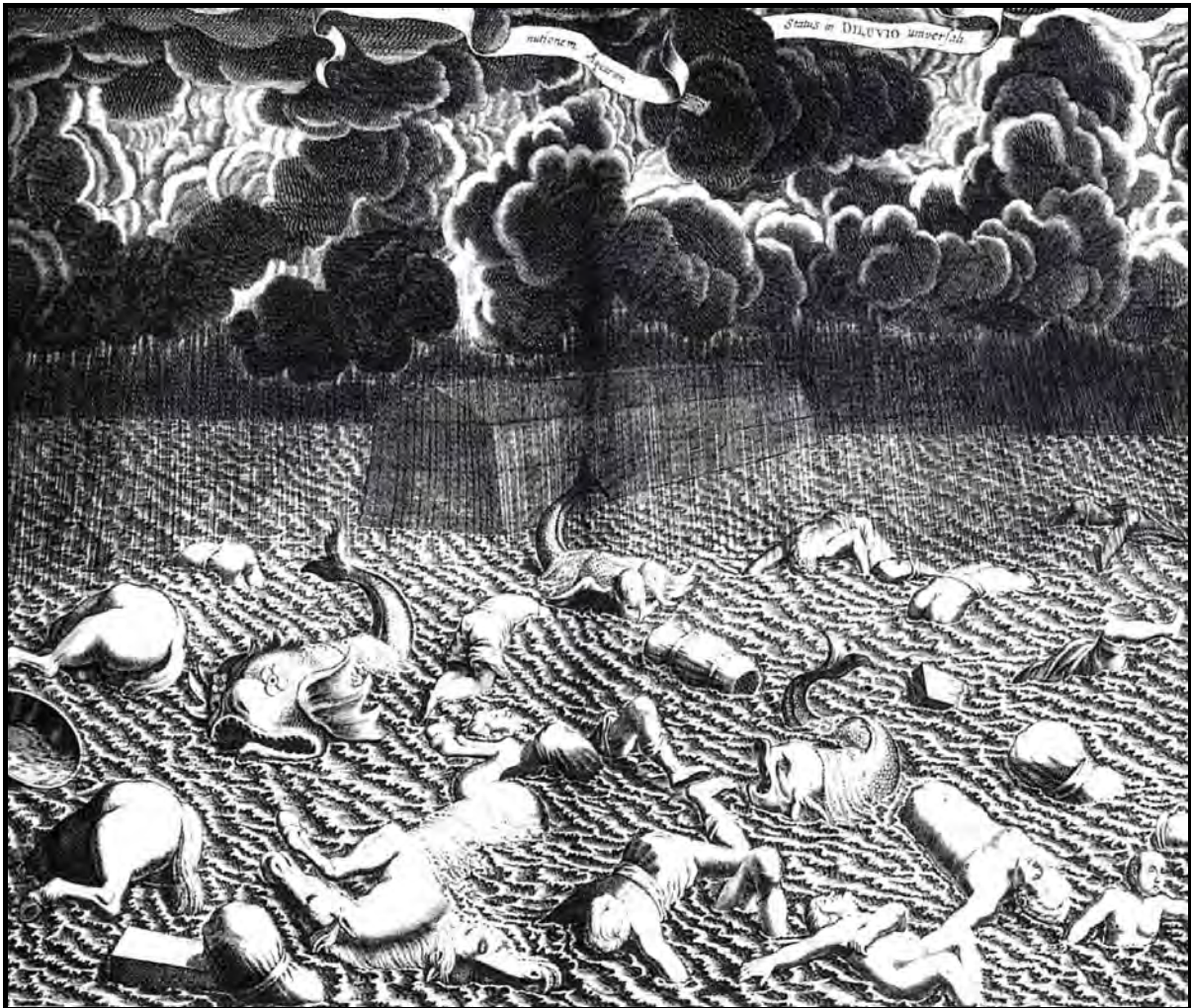
***“It was You who split open the sea (Hebrew - “baqa”) by Your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert. It was You who opened up (Hebrew - “baqa”) springs and streams; You dried up the ever flowing rivers.” (Psalm 74:13-15)***

In Psalm 78, *“baqa”* is used both in reference to the parting of the waters of the Red Sea before the Children of Israel and the breaking open of the rocks in the desert which provided the Israelites with drinking water:

***“He divided (Hebrew - “baqa”) the sea and led them through; He made the water stand firm like a wall...He split (Hebrew - “baqa”) the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; He brought streams out of the rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.” (Psalm 78:13-16)***

The second major source of the waters of the Flood is indicated by the phrase ***“and the floodgates of heaven were opened.”*** Once again, the words must be understood

in the context of the creation account of Genesis 1. There we are told that God separated the waters above and below the expanse of the sky from one another: ***“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. And God called the expanse ‘sky.’”*** (Genesis 1: 6-8) The crucial term in these verses is the Hebrew noun *“raqia”* which means *“a spread out thinness”* or, as the NIV translates, an *“expanse.”* The KJV uses the more traditional term *“firmament”* in this context. The text is quite explicit in defining the *“raqia”* here as the *“sky,”* this is, the atmosphere which surrounds the earth. It further indicates that God placed a great canopy of water around the outer edge of the atmosphere. Henry Morris explains:

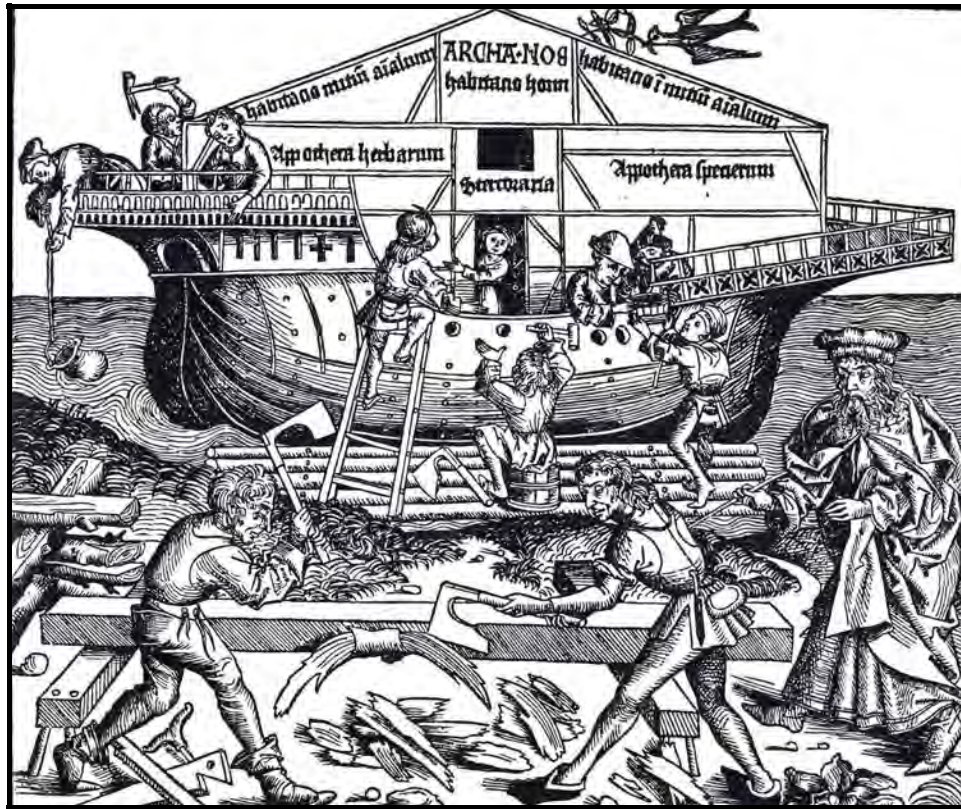


*“The Wake of the Flood” 17<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration*

*“The ‘waters above the firmament’ constituted the vast vaporous canopy which maintained the earth as a beautiful greenhouse, preventing cold temperatures and therefore preventing wind and rain storms. Being in the vapor state, it was invisible and fully transparent but nevertheless contained vast quantities of water extending far out into space.”* (Morris, p. 194 For a more detailed discussion of this issue see the notes on Genesis 1:6-8.)

Now, **“the floodgates of heaven were opened”** and the vast amounts of water which had surrounded the entire atmosphere of the planet were suddenly precipitated down onto the surface. Once again, the language of the text suggests rapid catastrophic action. Cassutto sums up the significance of the phrase: *“The expression connotes that during the Flood it did not rain in normal measure, but the windows of heaven were opened wide and the water poured from them in large quantities without any restraint.”* (Cassutto, p. 87) All of this happened very quickly with disastrous consequences.

The rupture of the underground aquifers and the venting of their contents onto the surface combined with the collapse of the vast water canopy above the atmosphere would have been accompanied by massive worldwide seismic disturbances, widespread earthquakes, and volcanos as the crust of the earth buckled, broke, and shifted. Once this cataclysmic process had been initiated, a natural process of chain re-action would have caused it to intensify and spread across the globe. All this would have been further exacerbated by the incredible weight of flood waters rapidly accumulating all across the face of the earth. The possibilities of the scenario outlined in Genesis far exceed the limits of our imagination. The original land mass was torn apart and the various continents as they now exist came into being. Great mountain ranges, plunging valleys, and deep basins rose and fell as the earth was transformed geographically and geologically into a much less hospitable home for fallen mankind. Some would suggest that the planet itself shifted on its axis, tilting to its present position and exaggerating the climatic extremes that now characterize global weather. No doubt widespread seismic disturbances continued long after the flood waters receded and worldwide sea-levels surged and ebbed. Creation scientists have proposed a broad variety of natural causative agents which God could have used to bring about all of these changes. Or, perhaps, God’s intervention was directly supernatural without recourse to any intermediate means. Whatever the case may be, all that is necessary for us to know is included here in the words of the Biblical text. Henry Morris says it well: *“The simple*



*“The Building of the Ark” by Hartmann Schedel - 1493*

*statement of Verse 11 provides the basic information needed to explain the physical cause of the great Flood, all, of course, under the providential supervision of the same God who created the earth and its lands and waters in the first place.”* (Morris, p. 197) Our responsibility is study the text carefully, understand it clearly, and believe it completely. Conjecture and speculation beyond that is always fraught with peril.

**“And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”** - The actual event conforms perfectly to God prediction. The Lord had indicated to Noah that this is the way it would be (cf. 8:4) and this is exactly the way it was. The text uses the Hebrew noun “*gesem*” which is not the ordinary word for a typical rainfall. This is a most unusual, abnormal downpour both in its intensity and its duration.

### ***Verses 13-16***

***On that very day, Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its***

*kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God has commanded Noah. Then the Lord shut him in.*

**“On that very day...”** - These verses reiterate and reinforce the grim message of the preceding paragraphs. No new information is provided about either the human or animal inhabitants of the ark. Instead, the inspired author deliberately heaps phrase upon phrase so that the reader may begin to comprehend the immensity of these events and their importance for the future of mankind. With characteristic color Luther stresses the Law/Gospel purpose behind all this verbiage:

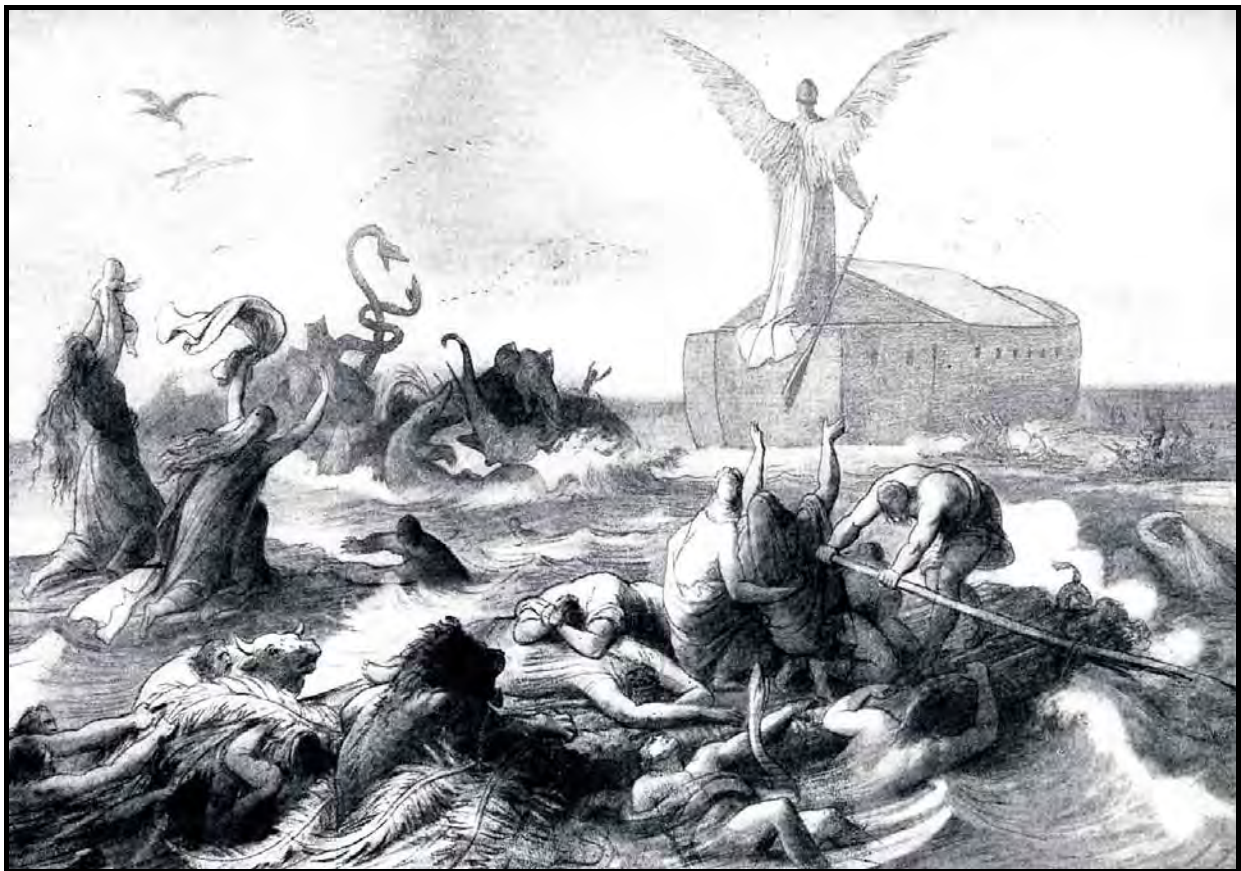
*“Here Moses begins to be amazingly wordy, so that his wordiness grates on sensitive ears because he repeats the same things so often and apparently without point...These words are not without purpose, as it seems to empty-headed and dull readers. They impel us to fear God and bring us face to face with what is going on, in order that after we have been disheartened by the thought of such great wrath, we may begin to fear God in earnest and cease to sin. Moses seems to have written these words with a profusion of tears. His eyes and mind are so completely fixed on that terrible display of wrath that he cannot help repeating the same thing several times. Surely he is doing this in order to thrust the spurs of the fear of God into the hearts of his godly readers.”* (Luther, AE, II, p. 96)

**“Then the Lord shut him in.”** - There is a note of decisive finality in the paragraph’s concluding phrase. The hour of repentance is past and the hour of judgment has come. No one else will attain the safe refuge of the ark and only those within its walls will survive the global devastation that is about to begin. It is significant to note that in this instance, the text uses the covenant name of the God of love “*Yahweh*.” God’s action in sealing the ark is designed to be an act of comforting reassurance to a no doubt apprehensive Noah and his family. John Chrysostom, the great preacher of Byzantium describes God’s solicitude in this way:

*“The text goes on, ‘The Lord shut the ark from the outside.’ Notice in this place too the considerateness in the expression ‘God shut the ark from the outside,’ to teach us that He had ensured the good man’s complete safety. The reason for adding ‘from the outside’ to ‘he shut’*

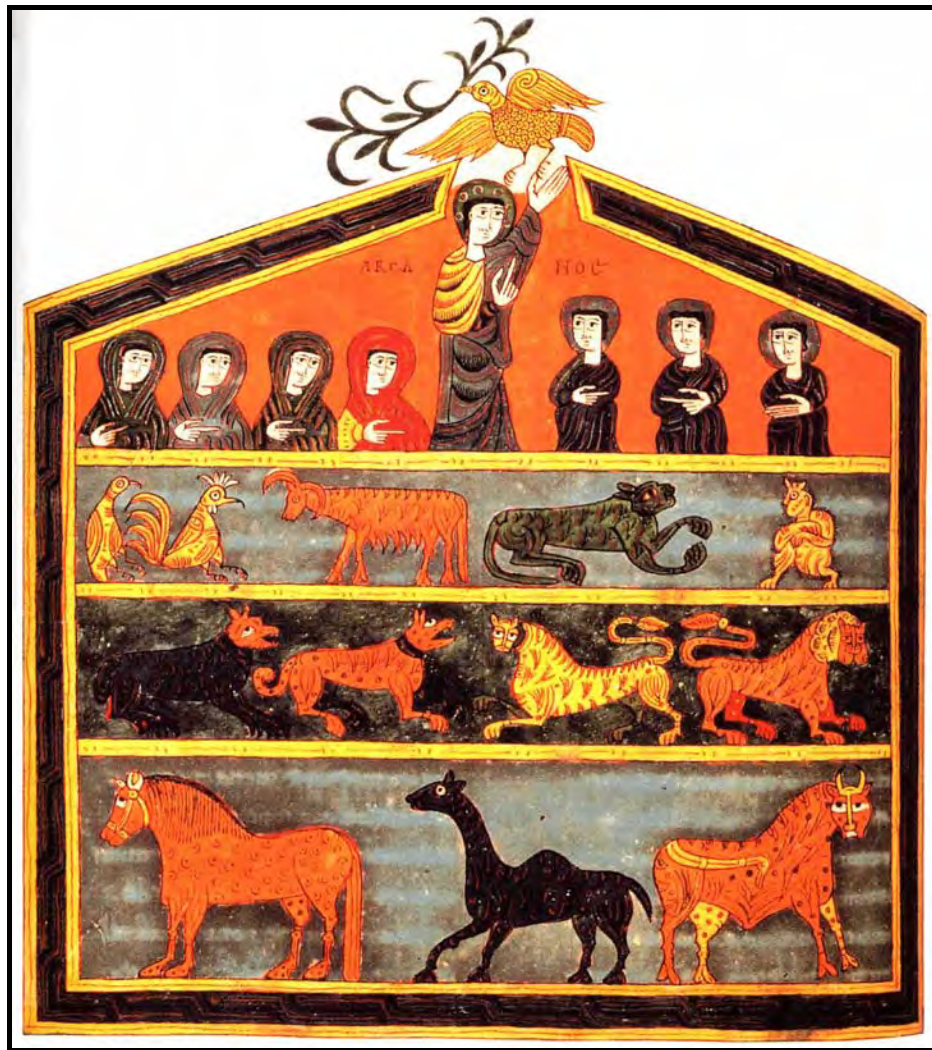
*was that the good man might not be the position of seeing the disaster occur and suffering even greater distress. I mean if he brooded over that terrible Flood and set indelibly in his mind the destruction of the human race, the complete annihilation of all brute beasts and the disappearance, as it were, of people, animals, and the earth itself, he would have been disturbed and anguished.”* (Louth, p. 138)

19<sup>th</sup> Century German artist Wilhelm von Kaulbach depicted the stark contrast between the security of the ark and the despair of the doomed with powerful effectiveness in a painting entitled “*And the Lord Shut Them In.*” The flood waters are inexorably rising, the surviving men and animals fighting for the high ground. Frantic mothers hold their dying children up toward the ark in a gesture of hopeless anguish. And in the midst of it all, the ark drifts serenely away, piloted by a mighty guardian angel at its helm.



*“Then the Lord Shut Him In” by Wilhelm von Kaulbach*





*The Ark and Its Occupants” from the “Silos Apocalypse” - 1109 AD*

### *Verses 17-20*

*For forty days the Flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased, they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.*

*“For forty days the Flood kept coming on the earth...”* - Just as the Lord had warned (cf. Genesis 7:4) the waters of the great Flood poured out upon the earth from the fountains of the great deep and the open windows of heaven without pause or interruption for *“forty days.”* The emphatic repetition of the text is intended to clearly convey the unique nature and universal character of this world-wide Flood. The

Hebrew text uses the noun “*mabbul*” to describe the Flood of Noah, a term used solely in connection with the great world Flood. The ordinary Hebrew words for local flooding do not occur anywhere in this narrative. This event is in a class by itself and must have a title of its own!

The flood waters rose steadily and inexorably. The Hebrew text uses careful wordplay to remind the reader of the origin of this catastrophe. The verb “*rabbab*” - “*to grow great*” or “*to increase*” which describes the mounting of the waters presents a sadly ironic echo of the “*great*” (Hebrew - “*raba*”) wickedness of humanity which had brought about the Flood (cf. Genesis 6:5). The same sad reverberation can be noted in the next phrase - “*The waters rose*” (Hebrew - “*gabar*”) - which utilizes the verb from which the Hebrew noun “*gibborim*” (English - “*giants*” or “*heroes*”) is drawn. This is the word which Moses had used to describe the sinful offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men (cf. Genesis 6:4).

***“As the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth...and the ark floated on the surface of the water.”*** - But as the waters of judgment mount up to cover the face of the earth, the ark of God’s gracious salvation rises with them to preserve His chosen ones from destruction. That which serves as the agent of destruction for sinful man becomes the means of deliverance for the believers.

***“They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.”*** - The text leaves no room for uncertainty or ambiguity as to the extent of the Flood. The waters did not merely cover some mountains, they covered “*all the high mountains.*” To be sure that the point is clearly understood, yet another qualifying phrase is added - “*all the high mountains under the entire heavens.*” The combination of “*all*” and “*entire*” constitutes what Leupold calls a “*Hebrew superlative*” that “*disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood.*” (Leupold, p. 302) To hammer the point home yet another time, Moses specifies that the mountains were covered “*to a depth of more than twenty feet.*” The deluge covered the entire surface of the globe, submerging even the loftiest of the mountain peaks that existed at that time. No island of refuge remained anywhere.

As previously noted (cf. pp. 419, 426ff.) The Flood drastically and permanently transformed the face of the earth. The breaking of the fountains of the deep and the collapse of the water canopy would have caused devastating alterations in the planet’s

configuration. The earth's crust would have shifted and torn, folded and buckled beneath the immense weight of the flood waters. No doubt many of the earth's great mountain ranges and soaring peaks came into being during and in the geologically unstable aftermath of the Flood.



*“The Ark On the Waters” by T. Danziel Delt*

### ***Verses 21-23***

***Every living thing that moved on the earth perished - birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.***

***“Every living thing that moved on the earth perished...Everything that lived on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out...”*** - The deliberate repetition which conveyed the utter devastation of the earth beneath the waters of the Flood now recurs to emphasize the Flood's absolute and complete destruction of all life on earth. Again, phrase is heaped upon phrase to drive the grim reality home with inescapable finality. Kenneth Matthews notes *“that there are significant variations among vs. 21-23 that contribute to the already graphic depiction of the swirling waters and the doom they*

*hold for the earth's inhabitants.” He cautions: “To the modern reader these verses appear redundant, but when taken together, they build toward the climactic contrast, ‘Only Noah was left.’ This steady building up of the narrative commemorates all the more Noah’s survival.” (Matthews, p. 380)*

The creatures that perish in the Flood are enumerated in five general categories - ***birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.***” Only the animals of the sea that can survive in the water are spared, and even their numbers must have been catastrophically depleted by the tumult and upheaval of the Flood. From the greatest to the least, all the land animals and birds will die. From the tiniest crawling insect to man, the unique being fashioned in the image of God Himself - all will die.

*“There perished not only the flying creatures, accustomed to fly in the heights of the heavens, and the cattle, cherished by man, and the wild beasts, further removed from man, and the swarming creatures which are most despised by man; but also the most important of the created beings -man; not just a part of the human race, but the whole of it!”*  
(Cassutto, p. 95)

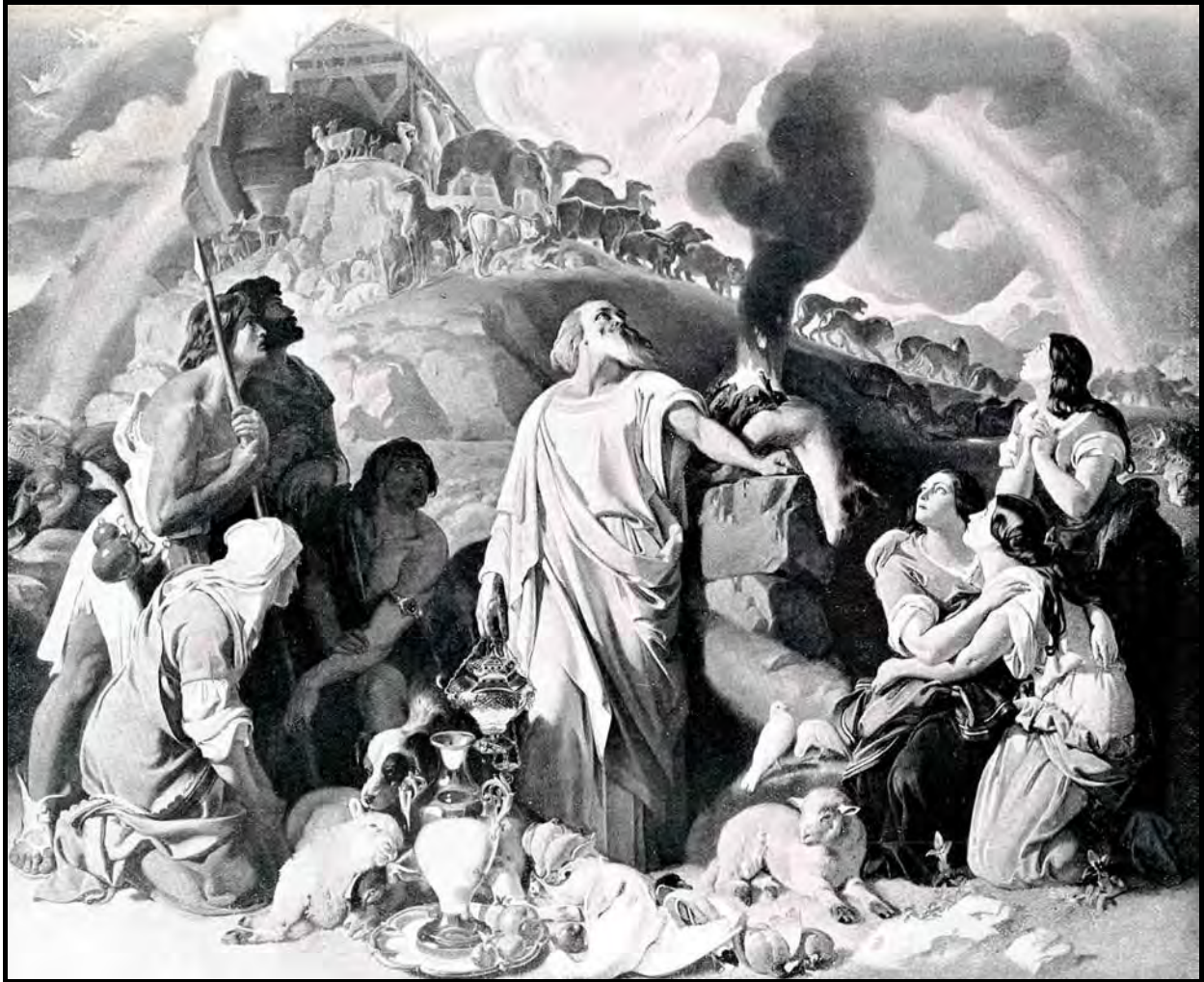
***“Only Noah was left and those with him in the ark.”*** - In a world of devastation, destruction and death only one safe refuge remains, the ark which God has provided for Noah and his family. The earth had been a wondrous place, teeming with life - the ideal home for man, the object of God’s love. But all of that is now gone, submerged beneath the surging waters of the Flood.

### ***Verse 24***

***The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.***

***“The waters flooded the earth...”*** - The text literally reads - *“the waters prevailed over or conquered the earth.”* The language is that of a battle, as though the land and the water were struggling with one another for supremacy. And in that battle is the waters that are victorious over the land. The waters prevail for ***“a hundred and fifty days,”*** that is, five full months of thirty days each. That number includes the forty days and nights of uninterrupted rain and ends with the day upon which the ark grounded upon the mountains of Ararat.

## Genesis Chapter 8



*“The Exit From the Ark” by Daniel Maclise - 1847*

### The Aftermath of the Flood

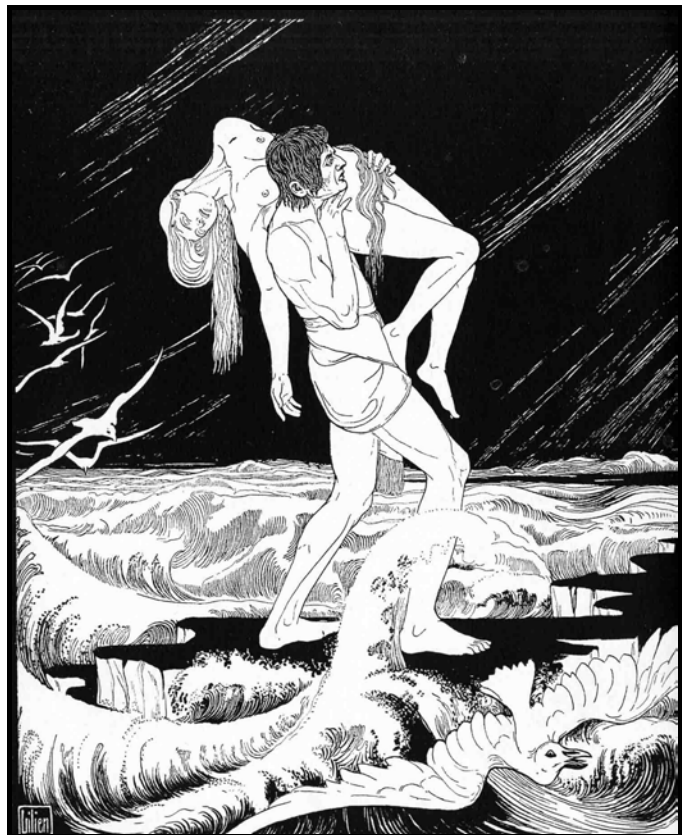
#### *Verse 1*

*But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and He sent a wind over the earth and the waters receded.*

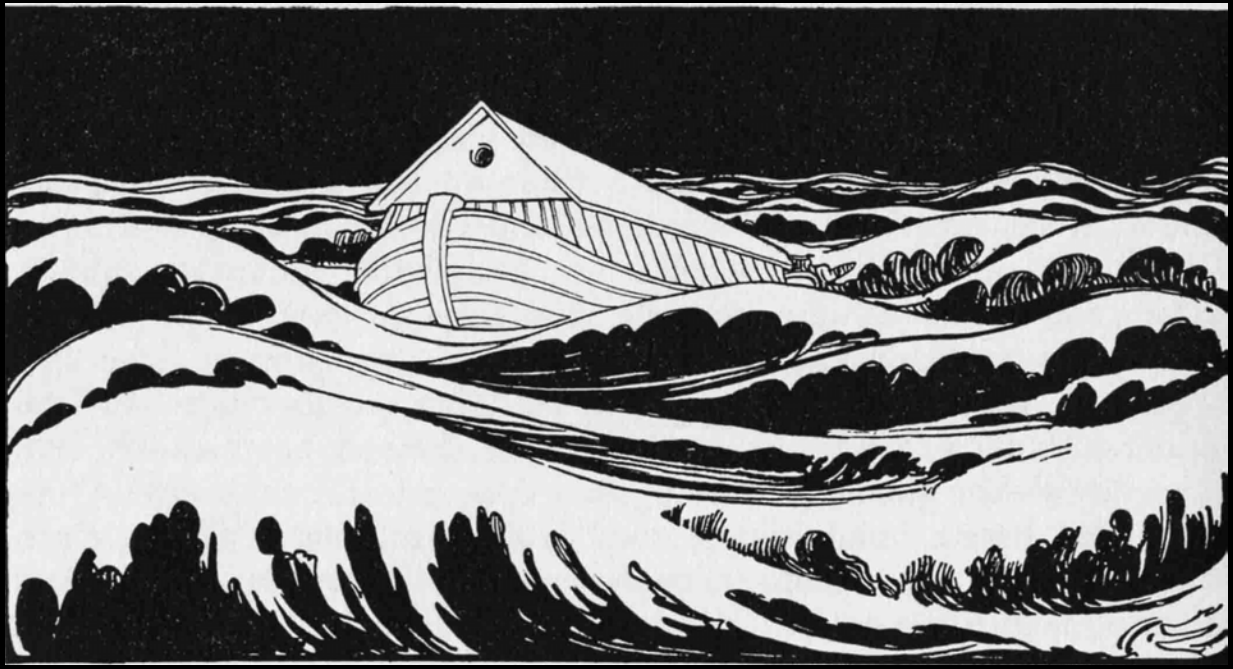
*“But God remembered Noah...”* - The text uses the dramatic Hebrew verb “zakhar” to describe God’s decisive intervention which brings about the end of the Flood. This word does not carry the same connotation as its English counterpart, namely that of recalling something that had been forgotten or overlooked. Hebrew scholar Nahum

Sarna effectively defines the sense of the term: “*In the Bible ‘remembering,’ particularly on the part of God, is not the retention or recollection of a mental image, but a focusing upon the object of memory that results in action.*” (Sarna, p. 56) This verb is used seventy-three times in the Old Testament with God as its subject, most often in the context of divine deliverance from death or disaster (cf. Genesis 19:29; 30:22). This is “*covenant language*” (Matthews, p. 382) which suggests that God is about to act in mercy and love as He had promised. These two short words, “***God remembered,***” explain the end of the cataclysmic destruction of the world wide Flood and introduce the restoration of order and life upon the planet. As the Flood did not originate within the natural pattern of cause and effect but as a deliberate exercise of God’s judgment upon sinful humanity, so also the end of the Flood does not come about naturally but as the result of deliberate divine intervention. However, in this instance, God intervenes not in judgment but in mercy. This phrase uses the divine name “*elohim,*” perhaps to emphasize the sovereign power which is exercised to bring about the end of the Flood.

Along with Noah himself, God acts to deliver all of the animals shut up in the ark along with him - “***and all the wild animals and the livestock that were there with him in the ark.***” The phrase recalls the anthropocentric purpose of creation, the judgment which had come upon it in the Flood, and the restoration which God will now accomplish. Every other life form which the Lord God created was made as a part of the perfect environment for man. When man became evil and corrupt, the entire creation was cursed through him. When mankind was destroyed in the Flood, all other life on earth also perished. Now, as God acts to restore man, He also restores all of the varieties of animal life which will continue to be a crucial



“*The Death of All Living*” by E. M. Lilien



*“The Ark Upon the Waters” by E. M. Lilien*

part of the human environment. John Chrysostom correctly observes:

*“See how God did everything out of His esteem for the human being. As in the case of the destruction of the human beings in the Flood He destroyed also, along with them the entire range of brute beasts, so in this case too, when He intends to show His characteristic love for the good of man out of His regard for him, He extends His goodness to the animal kingdom as well.” (Louth, p. 142)*

The destruction of the world by means of water suggested the reimposition of the chaos of the waters from which the original creation had come forth. Now, as God brings an end to the Flood, we hear the echoes of Genesis 1 anew. In the beginning, the mighty wind of God’s Spirit moved across the face of the water and creation began. Now, once more, the wind of God is the means by which the waters begin to go down - **“and He sent a wind over the earth and the waters receded.”** The use of language which parallels the creation account of Genesis 1 will continue throughout Chapter 8:1-14 so that the reader may clearly understand that what is taking place here is the re-establishment of original creation. The Hebrew noun *“ruach”* is, of course, the same word which describes the life-giving Spirit of God. Thus the ambiguity of translation in Genesis 1:2 - with some English versions speaking of a mighty wind

moving over the face of the waters, while others describe the Spirit of God hovering over the great deep. Both are justifiable translations of the Hebrew text. The divine wind which now initiates the receding of the Flood waters recalls the language of Psalm 104: ***“O Lord my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty...He makes the clouds His chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, flames of fire, His servants.”*** (Psalm 104: 1, 3-4) The arrogant condescension of liberal Bible critics who scorn the text’s primitive view that *“that the wind should have made the whole earth dry in about five months is a very childlike conception”* (Otto Proksch, cited by Leupold, p. 309) reveals more about their own jaundiced bias than it does about the integrity or accuracy of the Biblical record. With the Hebrew distinction between wind and spirit in mind, St. Ambrose dismisses the possibility that the text speaks of mere, ordinary wind in this phrase as the agency which causes the flood waters to recede:

*“I do not believe that this has been said because under the name of breath we may think of ordinary wind. In fact, mere wind has no power to dry the deluge...There is no doubt, therefore that the deluge was subsided by the invisible power of the Spirit, not through the wind as such, but through divine intervention.”* (Louth, p. 143)

### ***Verses 2-3***

***Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rains had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down.***

***“Now the springs of the deep...”*** - In Genesis 7:11-12 the sources of the massive waters of the Flood had been revealed - ***“on that day, all the springs of the great deep burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”*** Now the phenomena previously cited are abruptly terminated by the power of God to bring about the end of the Flood. Sarna emphasizes the revealing contrast between the Bible’s view of God’s *“sovereign power”* and *“undisputed control”* of nature with the *“subservience to nature”* of the heathen gods and goddesses revealed in the Gilgamesh Epic:

*“This is in sharp contrast to the limitations imposed upon the gods by a mythological, polytheistic system. The subservience of the gods to nature and their singular lack of freedom are vividly demonstrated in*



*Utnapishtim's account. Once the Flood started, the gods were terror-struck at the forces they themselves had unleashed. They were appalled at the consequences of their own actions over they no longer had control. They were 'frightened by the deluge' and they 'cowered like dogs crouched against the outer wall; Ishtar cried out like a woman in travail.'” (Sarna, pp. 56-57)*

The God of Scripture is unique in that He alone is the Source of all Being. Unlike the various polytheistic world views, both ancient and modern, the Bible teaches that the one God is not merely a part of nature for all of the natural world and the mighty forces of nature come from Him and remain absolutely subject to His will and control.



*“The Windows of Heaven Were Opened”  
Luther Bible Illustration by Matthias Merian - 1534*

The action of God in the spirit/wind, the closing of the windows of heaven and the fountains of the deep, and the cessation of the torrential rains causes the flood waters to begin to recede. Henry Morris explains that strong winds would have been unknown in the pre-flood world, sheltered as it was by the water canopy and with a consistent moderate global climate. But in the aftermath of the Flood, climatic conditions are radically different.

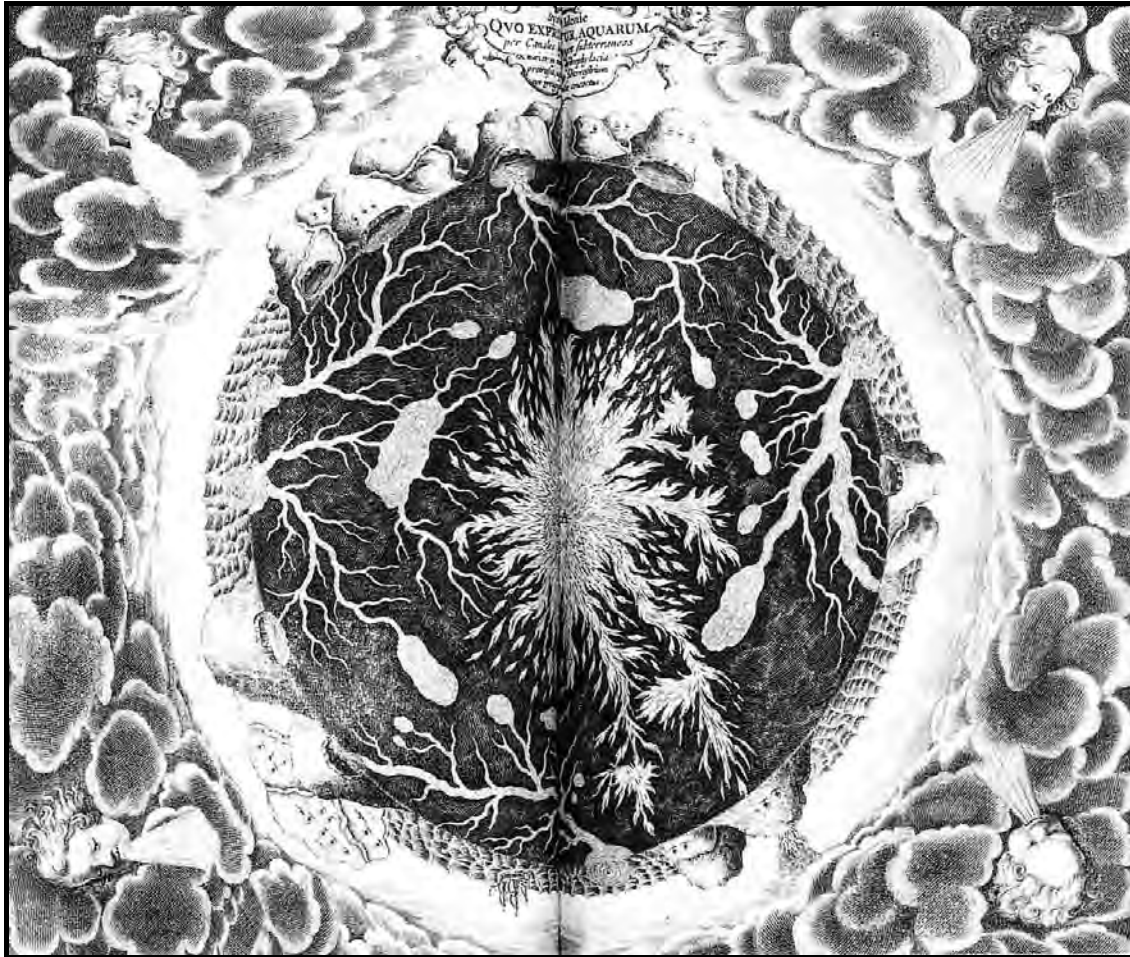
*“With the vapor canopy gone, however, sharp temperature differentials would have been established between equator and poles, and great air movements begun. These soon would have been complicated by the earth’s rotation, so that the present complex system of atmospheric circulations would finally be initiated. The early phases, in particular would probably have been quite violent. With nothing but a shoreless ocean, these winds would generate tremendous waves and currents, and vast quantities of water would be evaporated, especially in the equatorial regions.”* (Morris, p. 206)

Another major factor in the re-emergence of the land from the waters of the Flood would have been the shifting and buckling of the earth’s crust which continued throughout this period (cf. Notes p. 428ff.). It was at this time that the highest peaks of the towering mountains and the deepest depths of the trenches in the ocean floors which now characterize the topography of the earth came into being. As the land rose in some places and fell in others the continents as they presently exist were born. Psalm 104 is a magnificent hymn of praise to God the Creator. The second segment of the Psalm deals with the emergence of the land from the waters of the great deep. There are those who would contend that this particular section of the Psalm deals not with the original creation but with the re-creation of the earth which took place in the aftermath of the Flood. Whether these words are a direct reference to the end of the Flood or an merely an indirect allusion to that re-enactment of the original emergence of the land, they certainly provide an apt description of what must have taken place as the waters of the Flood came down again:

***“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.  
You covered it with the deep as with a garment; The waters stood above the  
mountains.  
But at Your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of Your thunder they took  
flight; They flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the  
place You assigned for them.  
You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.”***  
(Psalm 104:5-9)

Those who view this paragraph as a reference to Flood see Verse 9 as a paraphrase of God’s promise to Noah that He would never again destroy the earth by means of a Flood (Genesis 9:11).

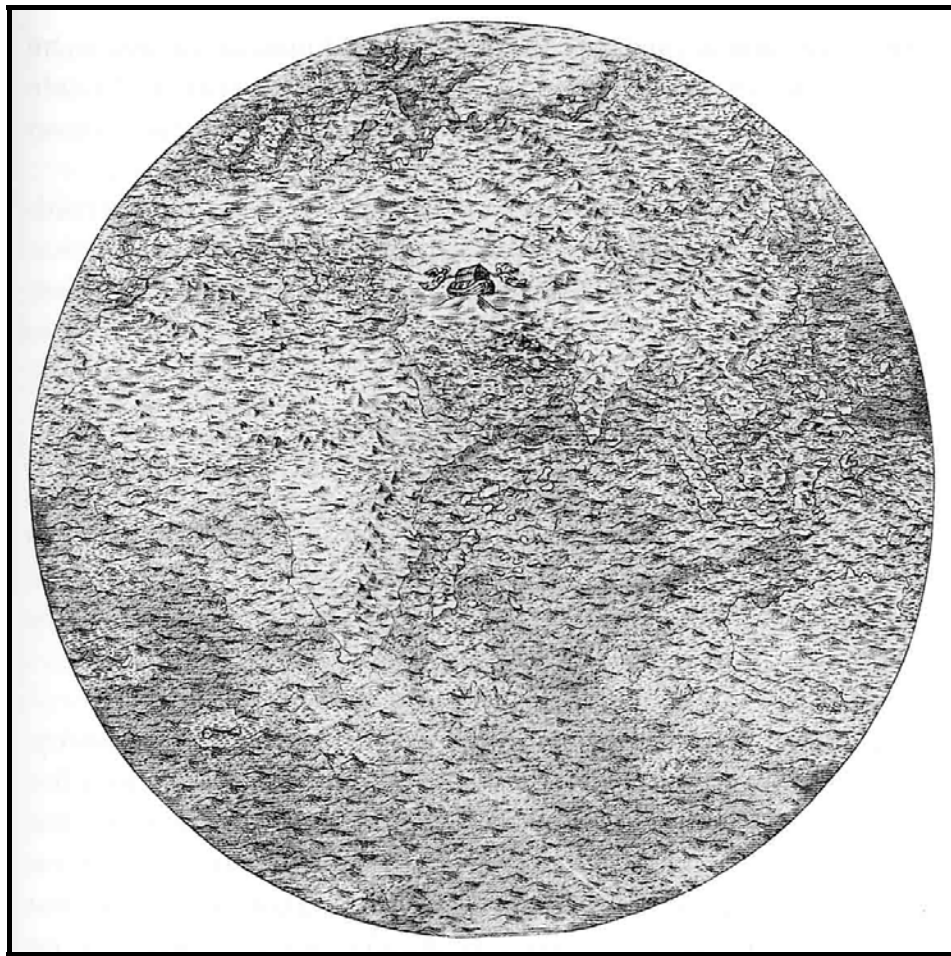
Whitcomb and Morris offer this intriguing description of the geological implications of all this in their classic book *The Genesis Flood - The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications*:



*“The Fountains of the Great Deep” by Athanasius Kirchner - 1678*

*“The picture then is of awesome proportions. The vast ‘waters above the firmament’ poured forth through what are graphically represented in the Scriptures as the ‘floodgates of heaven,’ swelling the rivers and waterways and initiating the erosion and transportation of vast inland sediments. At the same time, waters and probably magmas were bursting up through the fractured fountains of the great subterranean deep. In the seas, these fountains not only belched forth their waters and volcanic materials, but the corresponding earth displacements must have*

*generated powerful tsunamis. This tremendous complex of forces, diastrophic and hydrodynamic, must, beyond any question have profoundly altered the antediluvian topography and geology of the earth's crust. Powerful currents, of all directions and magnitudes and periods, must have been generated and made to function as agents of intense eroding, transporting, and depositional potency....And now the Bible account speaks of a tremendous wind (Genesis 8:1). This was evidently no ordinary wind, as its purpose and result are said to have been to cause the waters 'to return from off the earth' ....The only way in which land could now appear again would be for a tremendous orogeny to take place. Mountains must rise and new basins must form to receive the great overburden of water imposed upon the earth....Probably there were no very substantial differences in land densities before the Flood, and correspondingly, no very substantial regional differences in*



***“The Present Continents Emerging from the Waters of the Flood”  
by Sir Thomas Burner - 1690***



***“The Deluge” by Jay Finnemore***

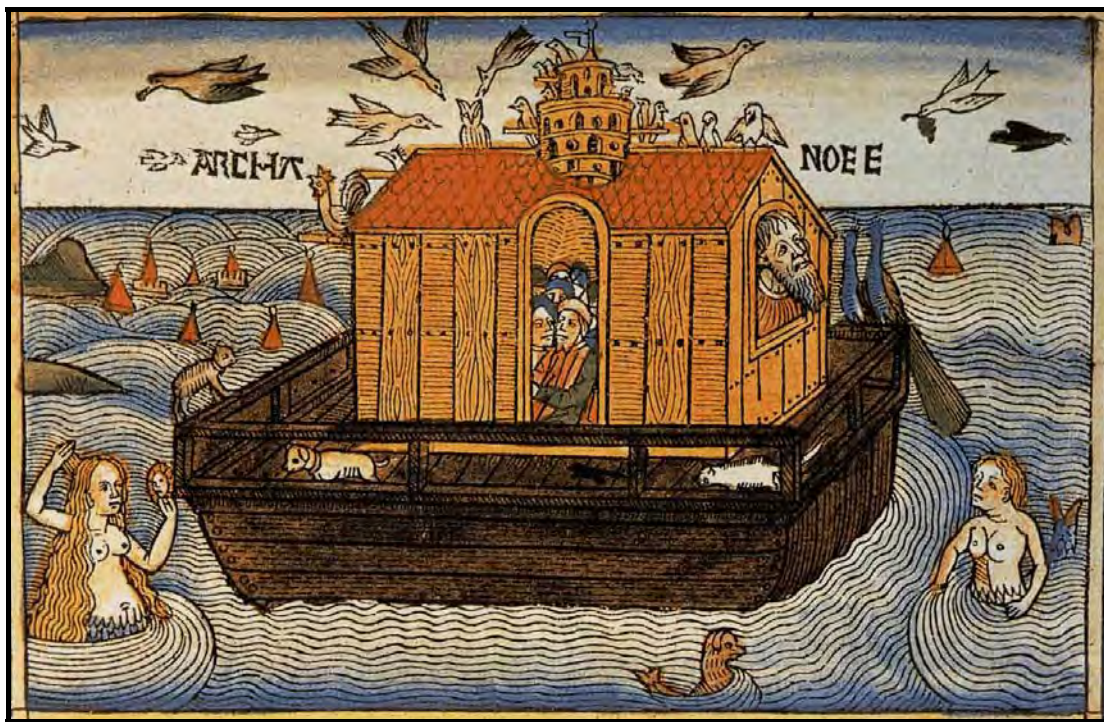
*elevation. Mountains were relatively low and ocean beds relatively shallow as compared with present conditions. But with the Deluge...a general redistribution of the prediluvian topography took place, placing the crust, for a time in a state of isostatic instability....Intense compressive stresses must have been generated in the crust, as previous surface materials began to settle into the voids left by the escaping magmas and water. The less competent and less dense, newly deposited sediments would have been easily deformed and uplifted under the action of such forces. The heavier simatic materials would tend to sink, forming deep basins, the lighter materials therefore rising and forming the continents. The trigger mechanism that set in motion the forces of isostatic readjustment may well have been the great wind, with the gigantic waves and strong currents certainly generated thereby, as the Biblical accounts seem to imply*

*(Genesis 8:1-3; Psalm 104: 5-9)....We have briefly sketched some of the inferences that can be derived from the Biblical record itself, as to the nature of the geologic action accompanying it. That it was a tremendous event, absolutely without parallel in all the earth's geologic history, with sedimentation and fossilization on a scale never approached before or since, seems an inescapable conclusion if the Bible is reliable witness, as we of course insist that it is...But the termination of the Deluge proper, occupying a period of little more than a year, did not by any means mark the termination of the abnormal hydrologic and geomorphic phenomena. Almost unimaginably profound changes had taken place in the entire domain of terrestrial energetics....And it is obvious that these and other geophysical changes associated with the Flood could not have been completely accomplished and stabilized for centuries.” (Whitcomb, pp. 268ff.)*

### **Verses 4-5**

***And on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.***

***“And on the seventeenth day of the seventh month...”*** - The one hundred and fifty days of the Flood are now over, five months after the Flood began on the ***“seventeenth day of the second month”*** (Genesis 7:11). As the waters continued to recede the ark was grounded ***“on the seventeenth day of the seventh month.”*** The seventh month of the Hebrew Civil calendar - which later became the first month of the Jewish religious year - is the month of ***“Nisan”*** in which the Feast of the Passover is celebrated. This corresponds to the months of March and April in our calendar. The text indicates that ***“the ark came to rest.”*** The Hebrew term is ***“nuah”*** which is the root word upon which the name ***“Noah”*** is based (cf. Genesis 5:39).



***“The Ark of Noah” - 15<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Illustration***

***“on the mountains of Ararat.”*** - The Bible does not indicate the specific landing site of the ark but designates a mountainous region in what is today Armenia in eastern Turkey. In Old Testament times this was the great Kingdom of Urartu which was



*“The Deluge” by John Martin*

vanquished by the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 51:37). The headwaters of the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie in this lofty tableland. The highest peak in the region, now known as Mount Ararat (elevation 17,000 feet), has been traditionally identified as the landing site of the ark since the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Leupold notes the geographic centrality of this location in the new configuration of the lands. This will be of critical importance and the animals and man are redistributed across the face of the earth.

*“From several points of view this location is central. Access to the Mesopotamian plain is easy. Asia Minor presents itself on the other hand. Syria, Arabia and Africa lie conveniently to the south and southwest. Asia is accessible to the north and the northeast. Europe is approachable through Asia Minor; India through Mesopotamia. Here is the Scriptural center from which the nations went abroad over the face of the earth.” (Leupold, p. 312)*

Numerous attempts to locate the ark or its remains on the traditional Mt. Ararat have been undertaken over the centuries. Kenneth Matthews offers this helpful caution: *“The search for the ark’s artifacts has been both a medieval and modern occupation; but to the skeptic such evidence is not convincing, and to the believer, while not irrelevant, it is not necessary to faith.”* (Matthews, p. 386)

*“The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.”* - Seventy-three days, almost two and a half months pass before the flood waters have subsided enough for the tops of the lower surrounding hills to become visible to Noah and his family within in the ark. The text does not preclude the appearance of other mountain peaks, elsewhere across the earth prior to this time. The point of reference here is that of the occupants of the ark.



*Mt. Ararat - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration*

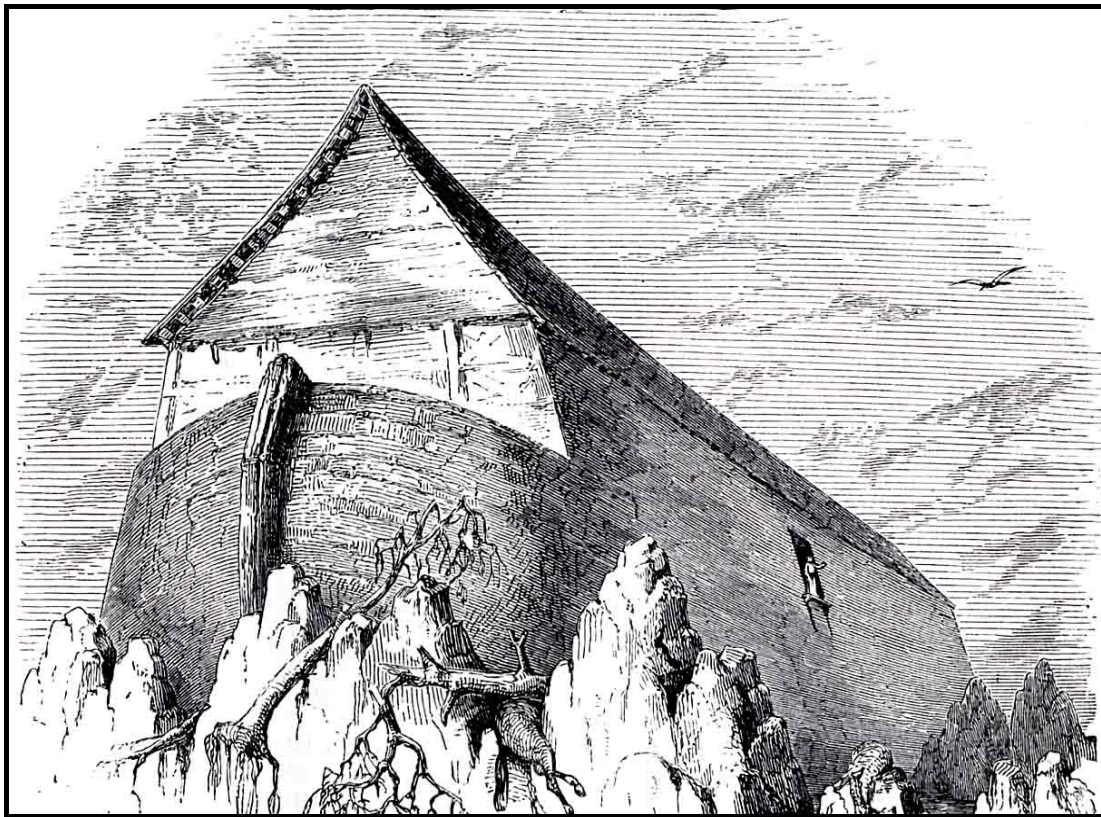


### *Verses 6-7*

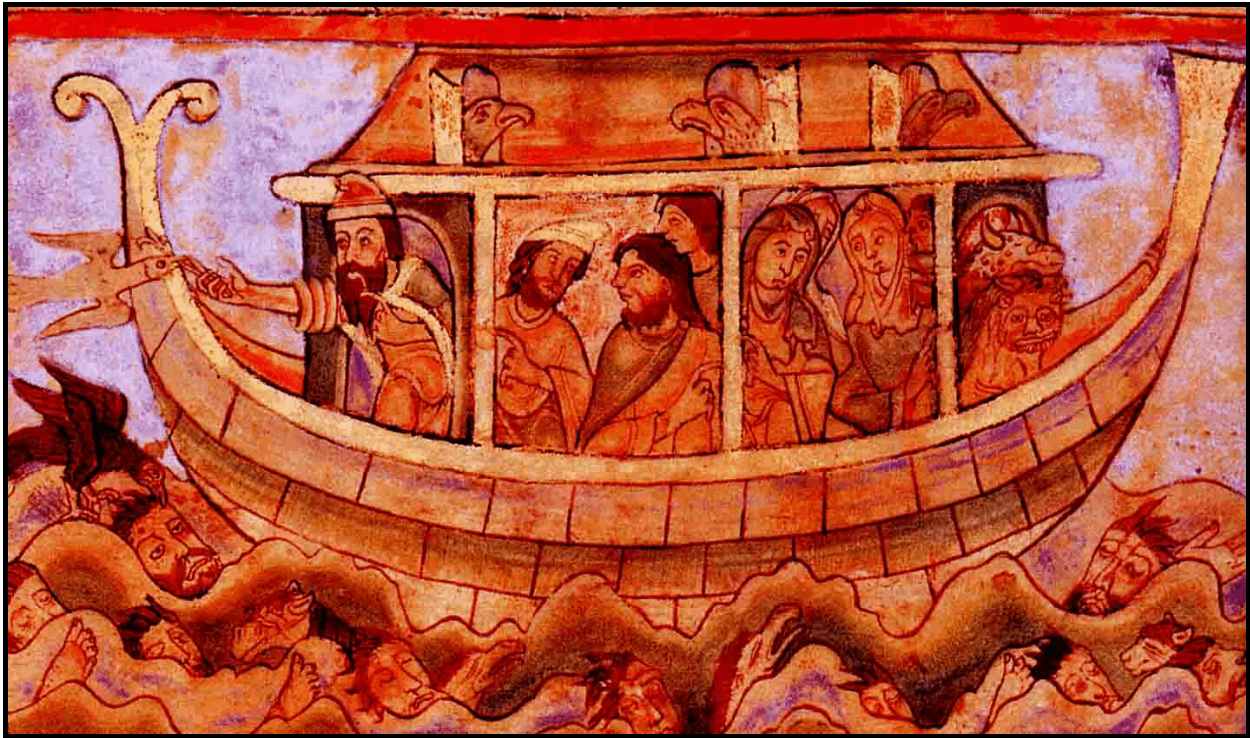
*After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.*

*“After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark...”* - Noah prudently waits a full forty days after the reappearance of the surrounding mountain peaks before taking further action. The language of the text here deliberately parallels the earlier description of the onset of the Flood. The Hebrew text in Verse 6 literally says *“at the end of forty days”*, using the same word which had appeared earlier in 6:13 to describe God’s resolve to *“put an end to all peoples”* by means of *“forty days”* of rain (cf. 7:4,11,17). At this point, ***“Noah opened the window.”*** The Hebrew noun is *“hallon”* derived from a root which means to cut or to pierce. The word itself gives no indication of the size or nature of the opening. In this context, the term might better be translated as *“hatch”* - indicating an opening designed to permit the release of the Noah’s aviary agents from the ark.

*“And sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth...”* - The raven is a



*“The Ark Upon Ararat” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Illustration*



*“The Raven and the Dove” - 13<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illumination*

scavenger, an eater of carrion. For such a creature the immediate aftermath of the Flood was an ideal situation. According to the Levitical rules of the Old Testament (Leviticus 11:15; Deuteronomy 14:14), the raven was an unclean animal, and the rabbis observed that Noah released it first as expendable since it was good for neither food nor sacrifice. The raven is associated in the imagery of the Old Testament with devastation and destruction. Hence Isaiah foretells the doom of Edom with these grim words: ***“From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again. The desert owl and screech owl will possess it and the raven will nest there. God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation.”*** (Isaiah 35:10-11) The specific meaning of the phrase which follows - ***“and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth”*** is unclear. The words may indicate that the bird continued to fly around the ark, finding both food and rest upon the carcasses floating in the water, or that it made repeated forays from the ark, returning each time after it had feasted upon the bodies of the dead.

### ***Verses 8-9***

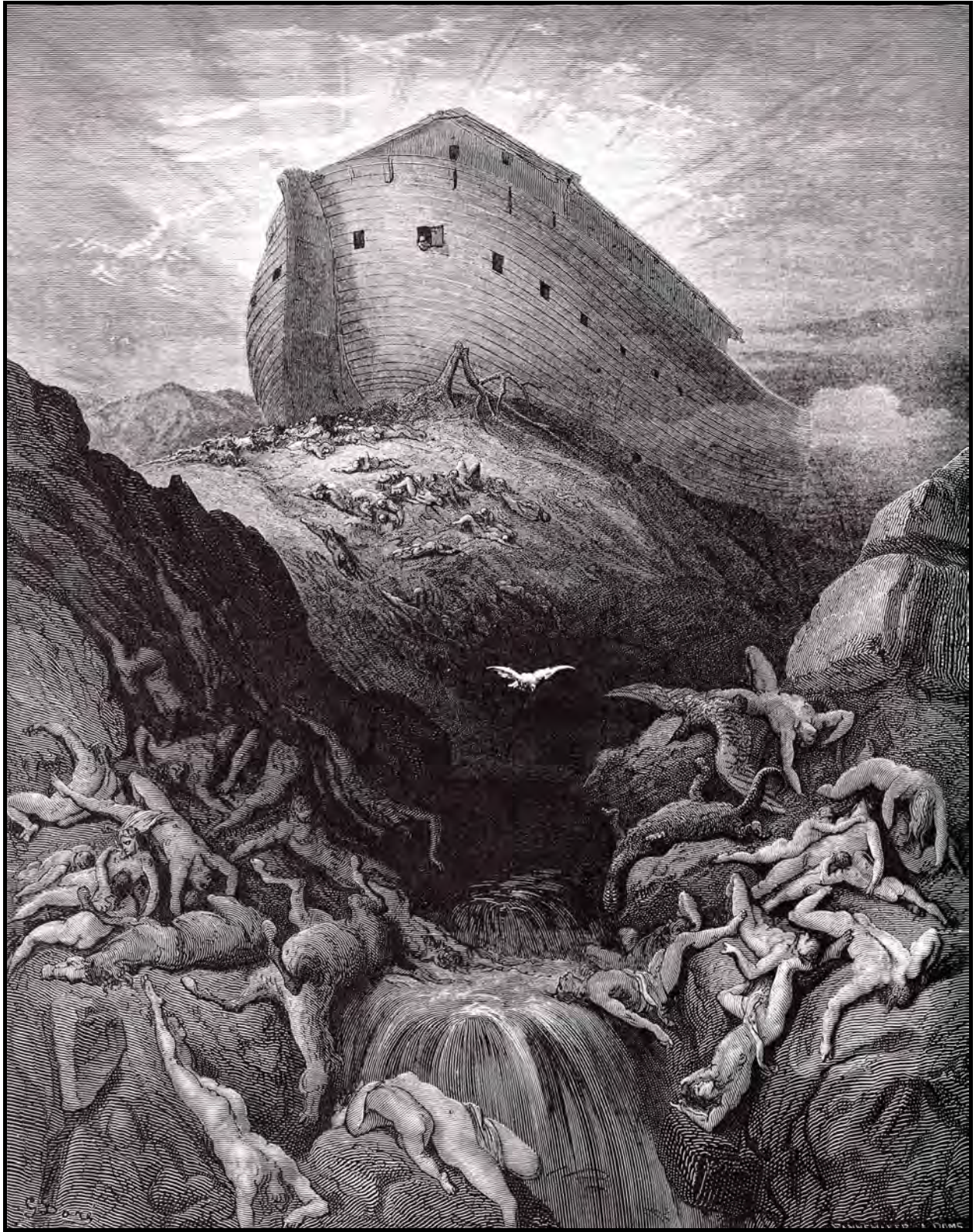
***Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over***

*all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark.*

*“Then he sent out a dove...”* - Noah waited seven days after the failure of his experiment with the raven (cf. vs.10). Then he chose another bird to send forth, this time a dove. The dove is a gentle timid bird, renowned for its delicacy and sensitivity. The dove was a clean animal, often used for sacrifice (Leviticus 1:14; 5:7; 12: 6-8; 14:22). Then, as now, it was a symbol of peace and love. Solomon cries out to his beloved: *“My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.”* (Song of Songs 2:14; cf. 1:15) Unlike the raven which was perfectly content to feast upon the dead, the dove *“could find no place to set its feet.”* When it was forced to return to the ark Noah understood that the water had not yet *“receded from the surface of the ground.”* He then *“reached out his hand”* and brought the bird back into the shelter and protection of the ark.



*“The Return of the Dove” 19<sup>th</sup> Century German Bible Illustration by M. Oppenheim*



*"The Dove Sent Forth From the Ark" by Gustav Dore*

## ***Verses 10-12***

***He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.***

***“He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove...”*** - A week passes as Noah and his family wait, no doubt anxiously, for the waters to subside. On the eighth day, the dove is sent forth again. At the end of the day - ***“in the evening”*** - the bird returns to the ark with the evidence that life on earth has been reborn - ***“in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!”*** Luther emphasizes that such behavior would have been neither natural nor normal for the little bird. This was done by the gracious command of God!

*“It was not through her own effort that the dove brought back the olive branch; this was a divine power and miracle, just as the serpent in Paradise did not speak through its own effort but through the influence of the devil, by whom it was possessed. Just as in that instance, the serpent spoke under the influence of Satan and seduced mankind into sin, so in this instance, the dove did not bring back the olive branch through her own effort and instinct but under God’s influence, in order that Noah might derive sure comfort from this most delightful sight. For the fruit of an olive tree is not the food of a dove, which likes wheat, barley or peas.”* (LW, 2, p. 157)

The text stresses that this was a new green leaf, freshly plucked from the branch upon which it was growing, the unmistakable indication that the world of nature was coming alive again. The fact that it is an ***“olive leaf”*** has occasioned much discussion among the commentators. Sarna points out:

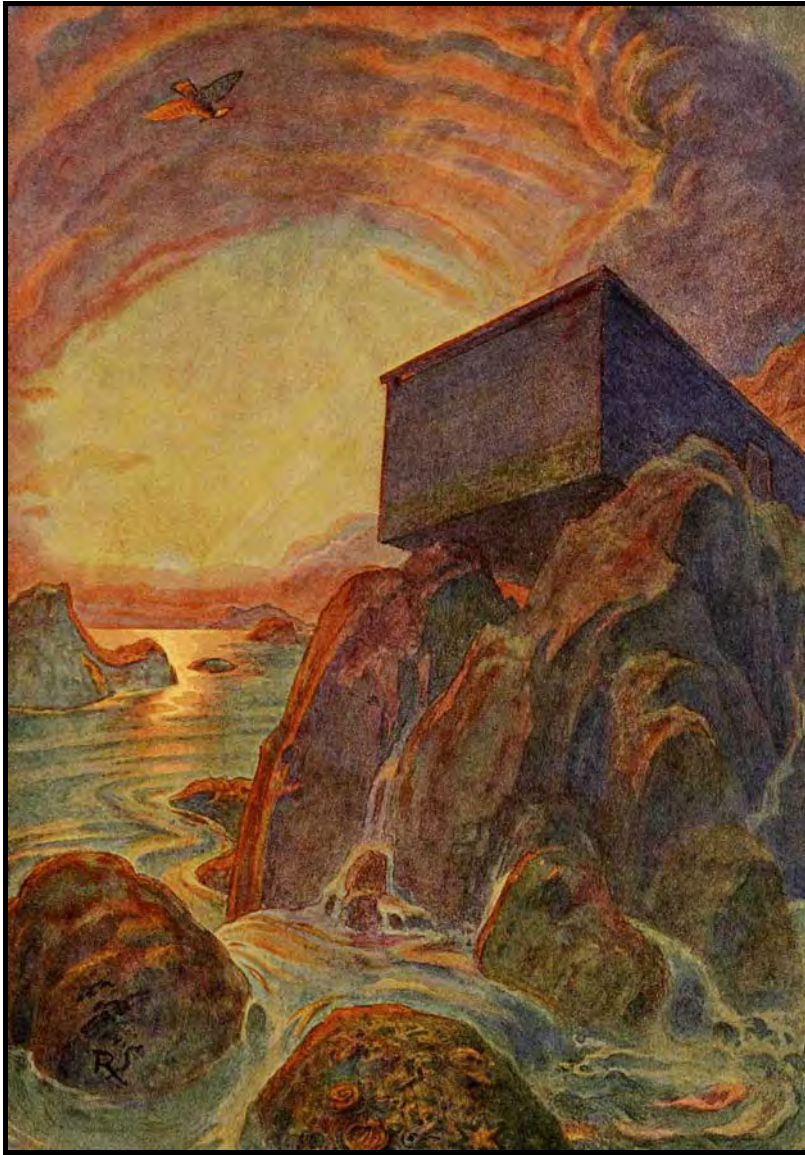
*“The olive tree, one of the earliest to be cultivated in the Near East, is an evergreen. It is extraordinarily sturdy and may thrive for up to a thousand years. Thus it became symbolic of God’s blessings of regeneration, abundance, and strength, which is most likely the function it serves here. In the present context, the olive branch is invested with the idea of peace and reconciliation.”* (Sarna, p. 58)

Ceremonial anointing with olive oil was a powerful symbol of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit in the Old Testament with particular reference to the promised Messiah, the Anointed One (Greek - "*Christos*"). In Psalm 89:20, for example, God declared: ***I have found David, My servant; with My sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain Him; surely My arm with strengthen Him.*** The prophet Isaiah foretold the ministry of the Messiah, using the same anointing language: ***"The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor."*** (Isaiah 61:1) The early fathers of the Christian Church believed that Noah's dove and her olive branch prefigured the anointing of Jesus and the ceremonial use of olive oil in anointing at the time of a Christian's baptism. Maximus, a 5<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop in the Italian city of Turin asserted - ***"For the very dove that once hastened to Noah's ark in the flood now comes to Christ's church in baptism."*** (Louth, p. 146) A parallel was repeatedly drawn between Noah's dove and the appearances of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove which validated and empowered the ministry of Jesus Christ. For example, the English churchman, the Venerable Bede writes in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century sermon on Genesis 8:



***"The Dove That Returned Not Again"***  
***by G.F. Watts***

*“After the raven he sent a dove, and it came to him in the evening, carrying in its mouth an olive branch with green leaves (Genesis 8:8-11)...The olive branch with green leaves is the grace of the Holy Spirit, rich in the words of life, the fullness of which rests upon Christ, as the Psalm says, ‘God, your God, has anointed you with*



*“The Dove’s Return” by Rudolf Schäfer*

*the oil of gladness above your fellows.’ (Psalm 45:7)*

*Concerning this gift given to Christ’s fellows, John speaks, ‘You have the anointing from the Holy One and you know all things.’ (1 John 2:20)*

*And by a most beautiful conjunction, the figure is in agreement with the fulfillment - a corporeal dove brought an olive branch to the ark which was washed by the waters of the Flood; the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a corporeal dove upon the Lord when He was baptized in the waters of the Jordan. Not only the human beings but also the living things which the ark contained, and also the very wood from which the ark was made, prefigure for us members of Christ and of the Church after our reception by the washing of the waters of regeneration. Through the anointing of the sacred chrism may we be signed*

*with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and may He deign to keep it inviolate in us who Himself gave it to us, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with the Almighty Father in the unity of the same Holy Spirit lives and reigns for all ages. Amen.” (Louth, p. 145)*

***“He waited seven more days and then sent the dove out again...”*** - After another careful seven day interval, Noah sends the dove out into the world once more. This time it does not return at all, thereby indicating that the safe haven of the ark is no longer needed. The waters have fully receded from the face of the earth and plants have been sufficiently rejuvenated to support animal life. The time has finally come for Noah and his family to leave the ark and return to the world.

### ***Verses 13-14***

***By the first day of the first month of Noah’s six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.***

***“By the first day of the first month...”*** - The significance of these events is indicated by the emphasis placed upon precise dates and times. The repeated firsts - ***“first day,” first month,” first year”*** - serve to stress that this marks a critically important new beginning for mankind and for creation. 314 days after the Flood began Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw for himself that the waters had receded. There was, however, evidently a good deal of standing water still in place, because the patriarch concluded that the time still is not right to actually leave the ark. The nature of the ***“covering”*** which Noah removed is unclear. Every other use of this noun (Hebrew - *“mikseh”*) in the Old Testament refers to the Tabernacle’s protective ***“covering”*** of tanned animal skins (i.e. Exodus 26:14; 36:19; Numbers 3:25). It seems unlikely that such a covering would have been adequate for the needs of the ark. In this instance, the term may refer to the roof of wooden beams which covered and protected the top of the vessel. The use of the tabernacle language here serves to link the Flood deliverance to the worship activity of Israel.

***“By the twenty-seventh day of the second month...”*** - The total duration of the Flood, from the day upon which the fountains of the great deep and the floodgates of heaven were opened (Genesis 7:11) until the day cited here when the earth was completely dry, was one year and eleven days. That total is based on a lunar calendar of 354 days. Cassuto notes that when those eleven days are added to the lunar calendar, the total is 365 days, exactly the number of days in a solar calendar year: ***“The cycle was complete. The sun returned to the point at which it was on the day the Deluge began, and the earth returned to the state in which it then found itself.”*** (Cassuto, II, p. 114)





*“God’s Covenant With Noah” by Rudolf Schüfer*

### ***Verses 15-19***

***Then God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you - the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground - so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it.” So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds - everything that moves on the earth - came out of the ark, one kind after another.***

***“Then God said to Noah...”*** - The exit from the ark comes at the initiative and

command of God, just like the construction of the ark and Noah's entrance into it. Noah lives by the Word of God. *"He did not venture to do things according to his own thinking. He entered the ark when he was bidden. He left it when God told him to."* (Leupold, p. 319) John Calvin agrees, and celebrates the faithfulness of father Noah, who *"did not move a foot out of his sepulchre without the command of God."* (Calvin, p. 280) The language of the divine order is similar to the earlier command to enter the ark (cf. Genesis 7:1-4) with the exception that in this instance the members of Noah's family are specifically enumerated - *"you and your wife, and your sons and their wives."* Their listing here may be designed to emphasize the critical role of these eight surviving individuals as the future of the human race. The same point is made in reference to the animals on the ark by the repetition of the creation language of Genesis 1, both in the description of the various kinds of animals and the blessing of Genesis 1:22 - *"God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth.'" Here the creation begins anew under the blessing of a gracious God.*



*"Noah Comes Forth from the Ark"  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration*



*“Noah Built an Altar to the Lord” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld*

### ***Verses 20-22***

*Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”*

***“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord...”*** - It is profoundly significant that the first thing that Noah does after leaving the ark is to worship God. This is a spontaneous expression of gratitude and an acknowledgment that the survival of the ark and its occupants during the Flood was an act of divine deliverance. This is the first reference to an ***“altar”*** in Scripture. The rabbis taught that the first altar had been built by Adam, and then used by his sons after him. Noah, they contended, rebuilt that altar after the Flood, at the same location, as did Abraham in his day to sacrifice Isaac

his son and the site of this ancient altar later became the great altar of burnt offerings in the Temple of Jerusalem. The obvious concern was to demonstrate an unbroken continuity between the temple worship of Israel and the worship of ancient patriarchs. God's subsequent instructions to Moses specified that and altar was to be construction of the earth itself or of un-hewn stone:

***“Make an altar of earth for Me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and cattle. Wherever I cause My Name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stones for Me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.”*** (Exodus 20:24-25; cf. Deuteronomy 27:5-6)

The bronze altar of burnt offering in the Tabernacle and later the Temple were also designed by God with “horns” protruding from each of its four corners: ***“Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide. Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze.”*** (Exodus 27:1-2) The horns signified the almighty power of the God to whose worship the altar was dedicated and became a place of refuge for the fugitive, who by clinging to the horns



***“Noah Sacrificing After the Deluge” by Benjamin West***

of the altar placed himself under the protection of God (i.e. 1 Kings 2:28) This ancient custom is still reflected in the practice of referring to the corners of our altars as “horns.”

**“He sacrificed burnt offerings on it.”** - The **“burnt offerings”** of clean animals which Noah sacrifices to the Lord are **“holocaust”** offerings, that is, offerings in which the animal’s entire body was consumed by the flames without reserving any portion of it for other use. The fact that the offering was totally consumed by the fire signified the person’s complete devotion to God. The presentation of a holocaust offering was certainly most appropriate under these circumstances as Noah celebrated the fact that God had spared his life and the lives of his family from the destruction of the Flood. The totality of Noah’s offering is further emphasized by his selection of animals from **“all of the clean animals and birds.”** Leupold offers this helpful summary of the scene:

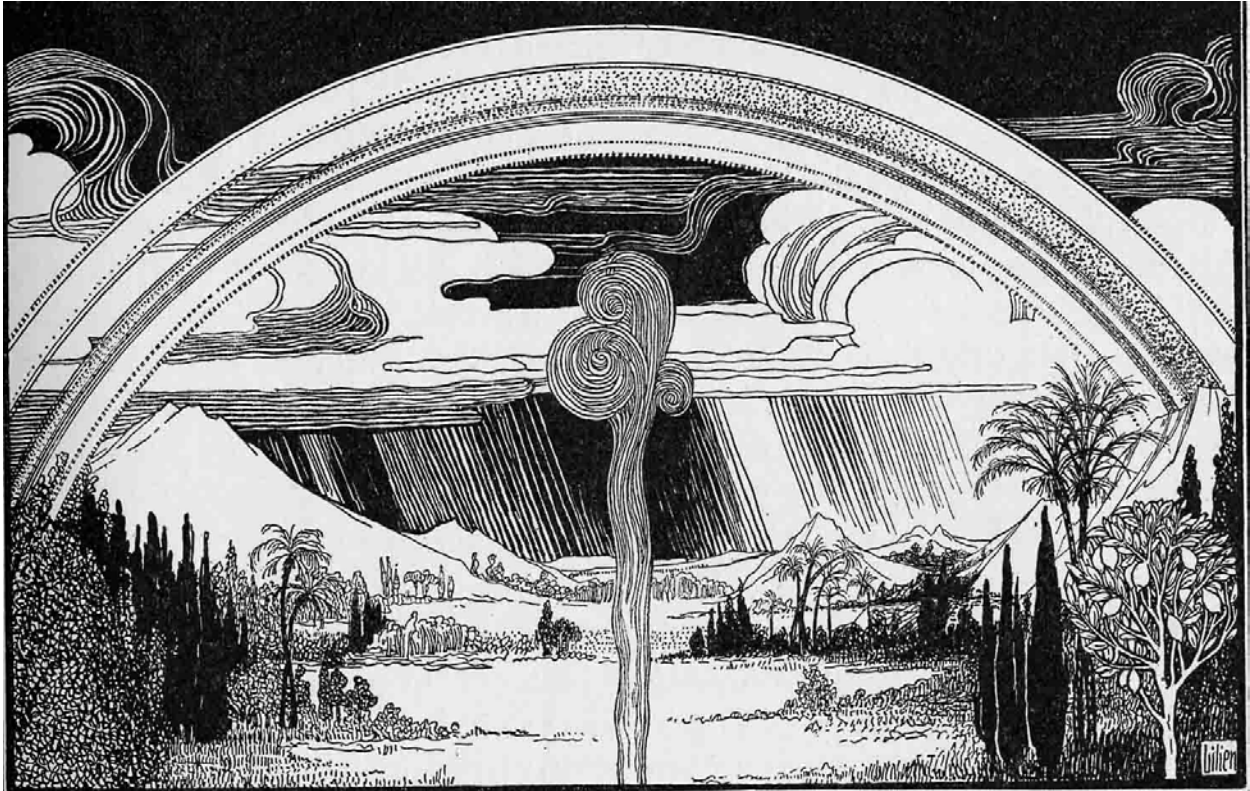
*“The true piety of the man Noah would be expected to give some true token as in this sacrifice. This sacrifice presents one of the most solemn scenes in all history: round about, the earth which is rapidly rejuvenating; the background, the most awful catastrophe in the annals*



**“Noah After the Deluge” by H. F. Schopin**

of mankind; above, the true and faithful Jahweh, who is man's only hope." (Leupold, p. 322)

***"The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart"*** - This is the characteristic language of the Old Testament to describe God's favorable response to



***"God's Covenant With Noah" by E.M. Lilien***

a sacrifice (cf. Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 1:9; 3:16; Numbers 15:3). The language is *"anthropomorphic,"* that is, it speaks of God as if He were a man. The verbal image is that of the smoke from the burnt offering drifting up through the air to God in heaven who inhales that smoke and is gratified by its pleasant smell. This is a picturesque way of saying that God is pleased by the Noah's humble faith and the devotion in which his offering has been made. God responds to that faith with a gracious word of promise.

***"Never again will I curse the ground because of man..."*** - The commentators are quite correct in identifying this segment as an example of *"divine deliberation."* These words are not spoken directly to Noah. This conversation takes place within

the mind and heart of God. But having said that, we must go on to note that God causes this “*divine deliberation*” to be recorded for our benefit as He inspires Moses to include His thoughts in the text of Genesis. In this way, God opens His mind to us and enables us to observe His heart. At the heart of God is Law and Gospel. The dialectic of Law and Gospel is the essence of the Bible’s message to man. Two opposite truths locked in tension with one another. Truths which may appear to contradict one another while both remain true. The paradox of Law and Gospel is revealed in this startling glimpse into God’s mind. In the immediate aftermath ever to fall upon sinful mankind, God graciously promises that He will refrain from punishing the world with destruction again until the end of time. To hearts overwhelmed by the Flood’s crushing Law condemnation, God now proclaims the sweet comfort of the Gospel. Luther observes:

*“Because it is impossible for their faith not to be shaken by the contemplation of such great wrath, God is, as it were, constrained to shape His acts and words in such a way that their hearts look for nothing but grace and mercy...In sum, He now begins to be a different God from the one He has been thus far. Not that God changes, but that He desires a change in the people, who are now swallowed up, as it were, in contemplation of His wrath.”* (LW, AE, 2, p. 118)

That which seems to be the contradiction between these two messages - the paradox of Law and Gospel - can only be reconciled at the foot of the cross. Siegbert Becker explains:

*“Take a few of the seemingly contradictory statements of law and gospel to the foot of the cross in faith, and there see how perfectly they are joined. God threatens to punish every sinner. This He did through the vicarious atonement which His Son made on the cross. When Christ died as a sinner, He bore our sins. We died with Him. Therefore God now forgives us in Him. The law also demands perfect obedience from man. But this perfect obedience has been rendered vicariously through Him who said that He had come to fulfill the law, to fulfill all righteousness. Christ’s obedience is the obedience of all men, as Adam’s sin is the sin of all men. Thus He meets the demands of the law and we are justified as doers of the law through what He has done. Likewise, God threatens to curse the sinners. But Jesus was made a curse for us. Therefore we are blessed in Him.”* (Becker, p. 220)



*“The Aftermath of the Flood” - Illustration from the 1534 Luther Bible*

The substance of God’s promise is that the Flood which destroyed all life on earth will never be repeated. The language of the promise here - *“Never again will I curse the ground because of man even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood”* - closely parallels the wording of the original curse in Genesis 6:5- *“The Lord God saw how great man’s wickedness had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”* The text clearly indicates that God’s promise of forbearance is not the result of an improvement in human nature or behavior. God promises not to destroy the world again by a Flood despite (*“even though”*) the fact that man is sinful by nature from the earliest days of his childhood. Luther forcefully asserts the importance of this assessment of human nature:

*“This is a highly important passage about original sin; those who disparage it surely go astray, like blind men in the sun light, and take no notice of what they daily do and experience...Nonetheless, there are*



*some who are considered outstanding theologians and want to be so regarded, but who belittle original sin with specious arguments...This is not a mild disease or shortcoming; it is the utmost lawlessness, the like of which all the rest of the creatures, the demons excepted, do not have... Careful note must be taken of this passage, since it clearly shows that the nature of man is corrupt. This knowledge of our corrupt nature is necessary above all else; without it the mercy and grace of God cannot be properly understood.” (LW, AE, 2, pp. 119-120)*

God makes two related vows: first **“Never again will I curse the ground because of man”** and **“Never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done.”** In this context the noun **“the ground”** might better be translated with the more generic term **“the earth”** since the point of reference is not the soil, as such, but the entire physical environment. Leupold does not exaggerate when he contends that the Flood was the worst catastrophe that has ever befallen our planet. **“Nothing worse ever befell the**



**“Noah’s Thankoffering” Luther Bible Woodcut - 1720**

**“As Noah and his household presented and offering to God and praised His deeds when they come forth upon the new earth, so also when you are delivered from danger by the highest grace, then raise up within your own heart an altar of thanksgiving.”**

*earth!*” (Leupold, p. 323) Natural catastrophes will continue to occur throughout the history of mankind, but none will effect the entire planet as did the Flood. *“He is speaking of the universal destruction of the earth, not of partial ones, by which He destroys fields, cities, and kingdoms.”* (Luther, LW, AE, 2, p. 118)

God goes on to promise **“Never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done.”** As the entire physical world will not experience another total judgment until the end of time, so also life on the earth will not be totally destroyed again. Nations and civilizations will rise and fall but God promises that He will never again destroy all life on earth by means of a Flood. *“Moses is speaking of a universal smiting, such as was brought about by the Flood. But from this it does not follow that He will discontinue any particular smiting and will disregard the sins of all.”* (Luther, LW, AE, 2, p. 128) This was a one time event and it will not be repeated again before the Final Judgment.

**“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest...”** - The earth itself is not eternal. Only God is without beginning and without end. Since the earth had a beginning (Genesis 1:1) it will also have an end. The promise that God gives here will remain valid **“as long as the earth endures.”** The ordinary rhythms of nature will continue without interruption or pause throughout the balance of the earth’s history. Those natural patterns of seasons and times are summarized in four pairs of opposites: **“seedtime and harvest”, “cold and heat”, “summer and winter”, “day and night.”** There is a comforting sense of stability in the repetition of these phrases that must have been urgently needed by this handful of battered survivors. *“These are the regular features of life on this earth that man can also depend upon as recurring as long as the earth stands, the knowledge of which will impart a stability to life and make for peace of mind more than almost any other temporal gift can.”* (Leupold, p. 324)

This is the first reference in Scripture to the seasons of **“summer and winter.”** Their introduction here may signal the drastic changes in the earth’s climate that had come about as a result of the Flood. The water canopy which had previously surrounded the earth’s atmosphere is now gone. The uniform temperate climate which it would have insured will now be replaced with seasonal variations which will, at times, become extreme.

# Genesis Chapter 9

## God's Covenant With Noah



*“Noah’s Thank Offering” by J. James Tissot*

### ***Verses 1-3***

***Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.”***

***“Then God blessed Noah and his sons...”*** - God addresses Noah and his family to restate the promises and commands of the original creation and to pronounce His divine blessing. Noah is the second Adam and with him the race begins anew. Thus the language of God’s promises in Genesis 9 closely parallels that of Genesis 1 at the

time of the original creation. God begins with the greatest of all His blessings, the gift of life. In the beginning God had said to Adam; ***“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.”*** (Genesis 1:28). The same words are now spoken to Noah; ***“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth.”*** (Genesis 9:1). These words are a blessing from God. When God blesses, His words are not merely an expression of hope or desire. God’s Word is inherently powerful. That which God says happens. God’s blessing here indicates that mankind has a future once again.

But there is also a significant difference. In the beginning, mankind was also instructed to ***“subdue”*** and rule over all the other creatures in perfect harmony and peace (Genesis 1:28). The harmony of the original creation has been shattered by sin. Now God says: ***“The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.”*** The world of nature has transformed by sin. Under the deadly impact of sin, that original harmony and peace has mutated into an ongoing struggle for survival. Now the law of tooth and claw prevails throughout nature and only the strong will survive.

The Flood radically transformed the entire natural world, sweeping away the original perfect creation. The degeneration of the physical world in the aftermath of the Flood was pervasive. In many ways it can be said that it was not until after the Flood that the radical consequences of sin were fully imposed upon the world of nature. The most basic changes in the physical environment which resulted from the Flood included the following:

1. The oceans are now much more extensive, covering a significantly larger proportion of the earth’s surface and reaching much deeper into the earth’s now torn and twisted crust. In addition to their original waters, the oceans now also contain the waters of the canopy which had previously surrounded the outer edge of the earth’s atmosphere and the vast waters that had been contained in the fountains of the great deep. No doubt, sea levels fluctuated for many years after the Flood overflowing and eroding the coasts of the land.
2. The land areas are significantly smaller than they were prior to the Flood and much of the reduced land mass is barren and uninhabitable. *“Pangea,”* the single great land mass of the original world has been torn

apart to form the seven continents of our world today. Unlike “*Pangea*,” with its relatively level topography which was ideal for plant and animal life, the surface of the new continents is much more extreme and irregular. The points at which the tectonic plates in the earth’s crust now meet are geologically unstable, prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. High mountain ranges were uplifted during and after the Flood as the crust of the earth shifted, buckled, and folded. This instability and the vast amounts of volcanic ash and dust hurled into the upper reaches of the atmosphere would have had a major cooling effect on the world’s weather and contributed to the Ice Age which was part of the Flood’s aftermath.

3. The descent of the water canopy to the surface of the earth, deprived the planet of the protection and insulation which it had formerly provided. The “*greenhouse effect*” caused by the water canopy and the gentle reliable mists which rose up from the ground to water the earth had provided a consistent moderate climate. After the Flood, the “*greenhouse effect*” is gone. The earth’s weather will now be characterized by radical temperature differentials - extremely warm at the poles and extremely hot at the equator. Oftentimes violent winds and storms, rains and snows, with vast desert areas where virtually no rain falls will now characterize the earth’s weather. This pattern will intensify as massive polar icecaps form at the north and south poles. Harmful radiation from space, no longer filtered by the water canopy, will result in a steady reduction in human and animal life spans.

4. Radical climatic changes combined with the residual waters of the Flood would have produced vast inland seas which gradually evaporated and huge glacial ice fields which advanced and retreated over much of the earth’s surface for centuries.

5. The abundant lush vegetation which had characterized the pre-flood world was entirely destroyed by the waters which covered the earth. The lands were barren of vegetation until such time as plant life could be re-established through the sprouting of seeds and cuttings buried beneath the surface. At the same time, the restoration of plant life would be severely hampered by the climatic and geologic degeneration of the post-flood world.

***“Everything that lives and moves will be food for you...”*** - In recognition of this changed reality God authorizes mankind to make use of the other animals for food. At the time of the original creation, men were vegetarians in order that the perfect harmony between all animal life might be fully experienced and expressed. It is evident from the preceding chapters, that sinful mankind, particularly the descendants of Cain, had already begun to kill and eat the other animals without divine consent. Now after the Flood, in the harsh new world that man has made for himself, the original harmony between man and the animals is replaced by ***“fear and dread.”*** God gives men permission to eat meat - ***“Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.”***



***“God’s Covenant with Noah” 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Engraving***

### ***Verses 4-7***

***But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. As for you, be fruitful and increase in number;***

***multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”***

***“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.”*** - With the permission comes a specific restriction. God’s granting permission to kill animals for their meat is a concession to the altered conditions of man’s life in a sinful world. But God makes that consent conditional upon not eating the blood. In the Old Testament, blood signified life -

***“Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, ‘You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off.’”*** (Leviticus 17:13-14)

In this context, the prohibition of eating an animal’s blood was *“to do honor to the principle of life”* (Cassutto, p. 126) and to be a reminder that in the original perfect creation life prevailed where death now rules. The blood belongs to God alone for He alone is the author and giver of life.

***“And from each man too I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.”*** - At the same time, the unique value of human life is strongly affirmed. The life of a human being is qualitatively different than any other animal life form because man was originally created in the image of God: ***“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”*** The crime of murder is uniquely horrendous because of the special quality of human life. God created man in His own image so that mankind might be the recipients of divine love. Man spurned that love and lost the divine image when he chose the way of sin. Nonetheless, human life retains its unparalleled value because of that original creation in God’s own image. God established and implemented the plan of salvation so that by grace through faith in His Son Jesus Christ sinful mankind might be restored to the divine image in which it was first created. The text indicates that given the sanctity of human life, the only appropriate punishment for the crime of murder is the death of the murderer himself. This is the *“lex talionis”* (the principle of punishment in kind - i.e. Exodus 21:24 ***“But if there is serious injury you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”***) There is sad irony in the truth that only by punishing the murderer with death can the sanctity of human life be maintained. This text had rightly been

called the *“locus classicus”* for the practice of capital punishment. Those in our own culture who oppose the use of capital punishment have chosen to forget this fundamental reality. Unlike many of the other law codes of the ancient Near East, the



*“Adam and Eve Mourning the Murder of Abel” by William Bougeureau*

Scripture never imposes the death penalty for crimes against a neighbor’s property. In the Bible, only the taking of God’s most precious gift, human life itself, should be punished by the execution of the offender.

The segment concludes with a repetition of the previous instruction - ***“As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”*** *“Noah and his sons are to be life producers, not like takers.”* (Hamilton, p. 316)





*“The Sign of the Covenant” by Rudolf Schäfer*

### ***Verses 8-11***

***Then God said to Noah and his sons with him: “I now establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you - the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you - every living creature on earth. I establish My covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.***

***“Then God said to Noah and his sons with him...”*** - Before Noah and his family had actually entered the ark, God had promised that He would enter into a formal covenant (Hebrew - “berith”) with them (cf. Genesis 6:18). That promise is now fulfilled as God establishes His covenant with Noah and his descendants. *“A covenant is the most solemn and binding form of divine promise, given for man’s double assurance and because of man’s carnal weakness, but quite unnecessary when God’s part of the agreement is concerned.”* (Leupold, p. 336) This is not an agreement between peers

or equals but a “*suzerainty covenant*” in which a superior binds himself to an inferior to obligations which are stipulated in the covenant by the superior himself. Such agreements were common in the ancient Near East between kings or noblemen and their subjects. In this instance, that superior is God Himself. God initiates the covenant and defines its terms and in sovereign freedom binds Himself to it. Luther emphasizes the profound need for this extraordinary expression of God’s faithful love to the forlorn remnant of mankind, still thoroughly intimidated by the overwhelming demonstration of judgment they had just survived:

*“Noah and his people were in great need of such comfort. A man who had been humbled by God is unable to forget his hurt and pain, for affliction makes a far deeper impression than an act of kindness...This comfort is expressed in many eloquent words and emphasized in various ways to meet the need of these wretched people who had been watching the immeasurable wrath of God rage for an entire year. Therefore, they could not be talked out of their fear or terror by a word or two; a great abundance of words was needed to drive back their tears and to soften their grief. Even though they were saints, they were still flesh, just as we are.”* (LW, 2, p. 145)

God establishes His covenant with Noah and his descendants and extended to all of the animals which traveled with Noah on the ark. All this serves to emphasize that the promise which God makes here pertains to every living thing and that God is concerned about the lives of even the smallest and most insignificant creatures. The animals are specified in the typical categories and then summarized with the comprehensive phrase - “*every living creature on earth.*”

*“Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood..”* - The substance of God’s promise is simple and directly stated. There will never be another world flood. Smaller floods may well devastate individual localities with great loss of life, but there will never be another flood the encompasses the entire surface of the earth.

### ***Verses 12-17***

***And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set My rainbow in the clouds and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears***

***in the clouds, I will remember My covenant between Me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between Me and all life on earth.”***

***“And God said, ‘This is the sign...’*** - The permanence of the covenant promise (***“for all generations to come”***) is demonstrated by the establishment of an on-going sign to demonstrate its validity. The use of outward visible signs as marks of a covenant agreement will become a regular feature of the Old Testament. Thus circumcision (Genesis 17:11) and the Sabbath day (Exodus 31:16-17) will become signs of the covenant which God has established with His people. In this instance the sign is a natural phenomenon, the ***“rainbow.”*** Given the new atmospheric conditions which now prevail on earth, it is probable that the rainbow to which God now refers is the first one that has ever been seen by man. This was also Martin Luther’s view: ***“I hold that the rainbow was a new creature, not seen by the world until now, in order that the world might be reminded of the past wrath, of which the rainbow shows traces, and might also be assured of the mercy of God.”*** (AE, 2, p. 149) The rainbow is set ***“in the clouds,”*** language that is customarily associated with the majestic presence of God. The only other rainbow mentioned in the Old Testament is in the prophet Ezekiel’s vision of the radiance which surrounded the heavenly throne of God:

***“Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell face down.”*** (Ezekiel 1:26-28)

The rainbow imagery associated with the glory of God continues in the New Testament book of Revelation. ***“At once I was in the Spirit and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.”*** (Revelation 4:2-3) Later, the mighty angel of the Lord who comes forth from heaven ***“was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like***



*“Ezekiel’s Vision of God’s Glory” by Raphael*

*the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.”* (Revelation 10:1) Thus, the use of the rainbow as the sign of God’s covenant to Noah is at the same time an affirmation of God’s continued presence in the world in the aftermath of the great Flood. *“Stretched between heaven and earth, it is a bond of peace between both, and, spanning the horizon, it points to the all embracing universality of the Divine mercy.”* (Delitsch, p. 290) Under these circumstances, immediately following the Flood, the appropriateness of the rainbow as the sign of God’s covenant of grace is unmistakable. The rainbow appears as the sun breaks through the dark storm clouds and signals that the time of storm and tempest is over. Franz Delitsch offers this beautiful summary



*“The Rainbow” 15<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illumination*

of the symbolism of the rainbow as the sign of God’s covenant:

*“As the rainbow shines forth against a dark background which but shortly before flashed with lightnings, it symbolizes the victory of bright, gentle love over darkly luminous wrath; growing as it does out of the interaction of the sun and dark clouds, it symbolizes the willingness of the heavenly to interpenetrate the earthly; extending from heave to earth, it proclaims peace between God and man; reaching, as it does, beyond the range of vision, it declares that God’s covenant of grace is all-embracing.” (Leupold, p. 340)*

It was a long-standing tradition among German Lutherans to teach their children to stop whatever they were doing in the barnyard or the field and

pray the *“Vater Unser”* whenever a rainbow appeared in the sky in commemoration of the role of the rainbow as the sign of God’s gracious covenant with Noah.

God’s covenant with Noah does not preclude the possibility of future judgment. It merely promises that God will never again destroy the entire world by means of a flood - ***“Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth...Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.”*** Worldwide judgment will most certainly come again when Christ returns in glory and power to judge the living and the dead, but the whole world will never again be destroyed by means of a flood.

## ***Verses 18-19***

***The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These were the three sons of Noah and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth.***

***“The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were ...”*** - The focus of the narrative now begins to shift from the patriarch Noah to the posterity that will come from Noah’s line. These verses describe the fulfillment of the blessing/command which God had spoken to Noah and his sons after they had come forth from the ark: ***“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’”*** (Genesis 9:1) The ***“Table of Nations,”*** with its detailed description of the lineage of all the peoples of the earth to the three sons, will follow as the natural explication of this verse after the interruption of the story of the curse of Canaan. The parenthetical insertion at the end of Verse 18 - ***(Ham was the father of Canaan.)*** serves to set the stage for that narrative. The text makes it clear that although Noah lived for three hundred years after the Flood, he did not father any



***“Shem, Ham, and Japheth” by J. James Tissot***

more children during that time. All of the details of this section are laden with profound significance for the future relationships of the nations that will ultimately arise from Noah's three sons. For that reason, the particular focus upon Canaan, Noah's grandson, whose descendants, the Canaanites, will play such a troublesome role in the future of Israel. That also explains why the perplexing incident of the drunkenness of Noah and the curse of Canaan is inserted prior to the Table of Nations. Cassutto offers this cogent assessment of the purpose of this often perplexing segment:

*“The purpose of this narrative in its present form is to characterize from the perspective of Israel’s Torah, the three branches of mankind that are descended from the three sons of Noah, and to illustrate their attributes by reference to the personality of their primogenitors...All of the characteristics of the three branches of humanity are presented to us by the narrative as though they were embodied - and forecast -in the different personalities of the three eponyms.”* (Cassutto, pp. 149-150)

### ***Verses 20-23***

***Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father’s nakedness.***

***“Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard.”*** - It would seem that a significant amount of time has passed since Noah and his family left the ark. Noah sons have had children of their own and are well on the way to raising them. A sufficient amount of time has also transpired for Noah to have planted a vineyard, and harvested the fruit of the vines which he had planted. The text identifies Noah as ***“a man of the soil”*** (Hebrew - *“ish adama”*), namely, a farmer. The language here parallels that of Genesis 2:7 which tells us that Adam was a man who was made from the soil, and in this way signals that in the life of Noah a new beginning for the human race is taking place. The wording suggests that this had been the patriarch's occupation prior to the Flood. The text also suggests - but does not require - the view that Noah was the first to practice the cultivation of grapes for the purpose of wine



*“The Drunkenness of Noah” by J. James Tissot*

making. This view is unique among the peoples of the ancient Near East who typically ascribed the origin of wine-making to the gods. The Egyptians, for example, believed that the god Osiris first cultivated the vine, while the Greek attributed that feat to the divine Dionysus.

***“When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered...”*** - If, indeed, Noah was the first to ferment grape juice into wine, then his drunkenness is understandable, since he would have been oblivious to the intoxicating effects of his discovery. The consumption of wine was not prohibited in Israel. As the Psalmist sings the praises of the Creator God, he notes: ***“He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth; wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.”*** (Psalm 104:14-15) The closing chapter of the Book of Proverbs commends the value of wine as a sedative: ***“Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.”*** (Proverbs 31:6) But while Scripture does not prohibit the consumption of wine or alcoholic beverages, the Bible’s warnings against the dangers



of drunkenness are grimly realistic. The classic description is provided in Proverbs 23:

***“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who had needless bruises? Who had bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and you mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. ‘They hit me,’ you will say, ‘but I’m not hurt! They beat me, but I don’t feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?’”*** (Proverbs 23:29-35)

The Bible also warns that drunkenness will lead to the loss of a person’s dignity and modesty and often leads to sexual sin.

***“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn to be exposed.”*** (Habakkuk 2:15-16)

***“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who live in the land of Uz. But to you also the cup will be passed; you will be drunk and be stripped naked.”*** (Lamentations 4:21)

***“They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution, but not increase, because they have deserted the Lord to give themselves to prostitution, to old wine and new, which takes away the understanding of My people.”*** (Hosea 4:10-11)

The “*Genesis Rabbah*” a fifth century collection of the teaching of the greatest rabbis of Palestine, informs us that the vine which Noah planted was actually a cutting from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which had been offered to him by Satan. In this way, both Adam and Noah would have fallen because of the fruit of the same tree. The commentary explains that the vineyard was actually planted as a joint venture with the devil who prepared the way for the evils of drunkenness with the sacrifices that he offered over the grape vines:

*“When Noah agreed, Satan killed a lamb and buried it under the vine; then did the same to a lion, a pig, and an ape, so that his vines drank the blood of all four beasts. Hence, though a man be less courageous than a lamb before he tastes wine, yet after drinking a little, he will boast himself strong as a lion; and drinking to excess, will become like a pig and soil his garments; and drinking yet more, will become like an ape, lurch around foolishly, lose his wits and blaspheme God. So it was with Noah.” (Graves, p. 120)*



*“The Drunkenness of Noah” - Mosaic from St. Mark’s Cathedral in Venice*

**“Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers outside....”** - The Genesis account of Noah’s experience is painfully brief, leaving a great many questions unanswered. As is typically the case, that brevity has spawned a plethora of speculation. Various Hebrew traditions suggest that the reason for that brevity was an unwillingness to describe the shameful details of what actually happened, including - in some accounts - sexual abuse, rape and even castration. The oldest traditions among the Jews speculate that Ham’s resentment was fueled by a concern that if Noah were to father more children, the inheritance of his three oldest sons would be diminished. In his classic study, *“The Legends of the Jews,”* Judaic scholar Louis Ginzberg summarizes the content of the rabbinic commentaries in this way:

*“In his drunken condition, Noah betook himself to the tent of his wife. His son Ham saw him there and told his brothers what he had noticed, and said, ‘The first man had but two sons, and the one slew the other; this man, Noah, has three sons, yet he desires to beget a fourth besides.’ Nor did Ham rest satisfied with these disrespectful words against his father. He added to this sin of irreverence the still greater outrage of attempting to perform an operation upon his father designed to prevent procreation.”* (Ginzberg, 1, p. 168)



*“The Drunkenness of Noah”  
from the Bedford Book of Hours - 1423*

If Ham's concern was indeed the protection of his inheritance, the rabbi's reasoned, that would also help to explain the text's perplexing focus on Canaan, who was Ham's primary heir. Others argue that Canaan must have played a more active role in these events than is specified in the text. Some suggest that Canaan was the first to observe Noah's nakedness and ran to gleefully report it to his father. Some contend that Canaan was cursed because Noah had already pronounced a blessing upon his three sons and could not undo that blessing by cursing Ham directly. Others among the rabbis offer the startling assertion that it was Canaan who actually castrated his own grandfather and that his father, Ham, merely approved and reported the dastardly deed his son had performed after the fact:

*“Some say that at the height of his drunkenness he uncovered himself, whereupon Canaan, Ham's little son, entered the tent, mischievously looped a stout cord about his grandfather's genitals, drew it tight, and unmanned him. Ham, then, also entered. When he saw what had happened, he told Shem and Japheth, smiling as if it were a jest for idlers in the marketplace, but earned their curses.”* (Graves, p. 121)

Those who argue in favor of a more dramatic offense point out that the phrase “*to uncover the nakedness of ...*” is often used in Scripture as a euphemism for sexual intercourse or incest (cf. Leviticus 18:6-19; 20:11, 17-21; Ezekiel 16:36-37). If this language is indeed a veiled reference to some form of deviant sexual activity, there is tragic appropriateness in the fact that the Canaanites were to become notorious for sexual perversion and depravity. The great Canaanite city of Sodom “*left its name for the unnatural vice practiced by its inhabitants.*” (Leupold, p. 350)

It is difficult, however, to square these more extreme suggestions with the specific context of events in Genesis 9, particularly in view of the brothers' re-action. In the end, we must conclude, that the Biblical account provides no firm foundation for any of this titillating speculation. Cassuto's cautious advice is well taken - “*We must not read into the Pentateuchal narrative more than it actually states, taking the words at their face value.*” (Cassuto, II, p. 152)

**“But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders...”** - Whatever the details of Ham's offense may have been, the text is unmistakably clear in its indication Shem and Japheth completely disagreed with and refused to participate in their brother's disrespect for their father. Ham had solicited their participation and support: **“Ham...told his two brothers outside.”** But their response



*“The Sin of Ham”*

*15<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illumination from the “Alba Bible”*

is decisively negative. They reject what their brother has done and emphatically disassociate themselves from it. They do not rejoice in Noah’s downfall, but act immediately to remedy their father’s shame. Moses informs us that they went to remarkable lengths to demonstrate their continued respect and affection - ***“Then they walked in backwards and covered their father’s nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so they would not see their father’s nakedness.”*** Luther remarks:

*“In this passage Moses records a truly noteworthy and outstanding example of respect toward a father. It would not have been sinful if the sons had approached and covered their father without turning their faces away. What sin would there be if someone came upon a naked human being by chance and saw what he did not want to see? When they hear from their proud and laughing brother what happened to their father, the two place a garment on their shoulders, enter the tent backwards - how amazing! - lay down the garment with their faces turned away, and so cover their father.”* (AE, 2, p. 173)

The contrast between the sorrowful restraint of Shem and Japheth and the happy malice of Ham could not have been more clearly drawn.

### ***Verses 24-27***

***When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, “Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.” He also said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in***

*the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave.”*

**“When Noah awoke from his wine...”** - The aftermath of these events is truly tragic. When Noah recovers from his drunken stupor, that is, when he sobers up again, he pronounces a fearsome curse upon Canaan, the son of Ham. The very intensity of the anger and the malice in these words has served to fuel speculation that *“the Torah has repressed the sordid details of some repugnant act”* and *“that in the fuller story, Canaan, son of Ham was a participant in the offense against Noah, a detail omitted here on grounds of delicacy and on the assumption that the original story was well known to the reader.”* (Sarna, p. 66) Be that as it may, Noah’s curse of Canaan plays a pivotal role in the narrative of the Pentateuch, setting the stage for God’s bestowal of the land of Canaan upon Abraham and his descendants and Israel’s bloody conquest of the Canaanites. Upon awakening, Noah realized that something had occurred while he had been unconscious. Evidently, Shem and Japheth must have reported the facts of what had transpired to their father when he asked them. The sense of the Hebrew verb in the phrase - **“and found out what his youngest son had done to him”** - refers to knowing something as the result of inquiry.

**“Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.”** - These are the first words of the patriarch Noah recorded in Scripture. This is also the first *“curse”* pronounced by a human being in Scripture. When the serpent (cf. 3:14), the ground (cf. 3:17), Cain (cf. 4:11-12), and the earth (cf. 8:21) were previously cursed it was God Himself who pronounced the malediction. The words of Noah’s curse, spoken by a man, are not to be regarded as some sort of magical incantation, which, having been properly intoned, becomes immediately effective through supernatural power inherent in the words themselves. The Bible does not indulge in such foolishness. Only the word of God has power inherent in it. When God blesses or curses, His Word itself, brings about that which it describes. Instead, these words of Noah are *“precative,”* that is, a prayer which expresses a wish or request. Noah is calling upon God to bring about that which he describes. He is calling down God’s judgment upon Canaan, Ham’s son. *“Noah’s words held no magical powers that destined the fates of future generations. His appeal was to God, whose will alone counted for what would become of the nations.”* (Matthews, p. 422) The substance of the curse that Noah calls down upon his grandson is that he and his descendants will be **“the lowest of slaves to his brothers.”** The Hebrew text literally reads *“a slave of slaves,”* expressing the concept to superlative degree. The NIV’s translation **“lowest of slaves”** effectively expresses the sense of the text.

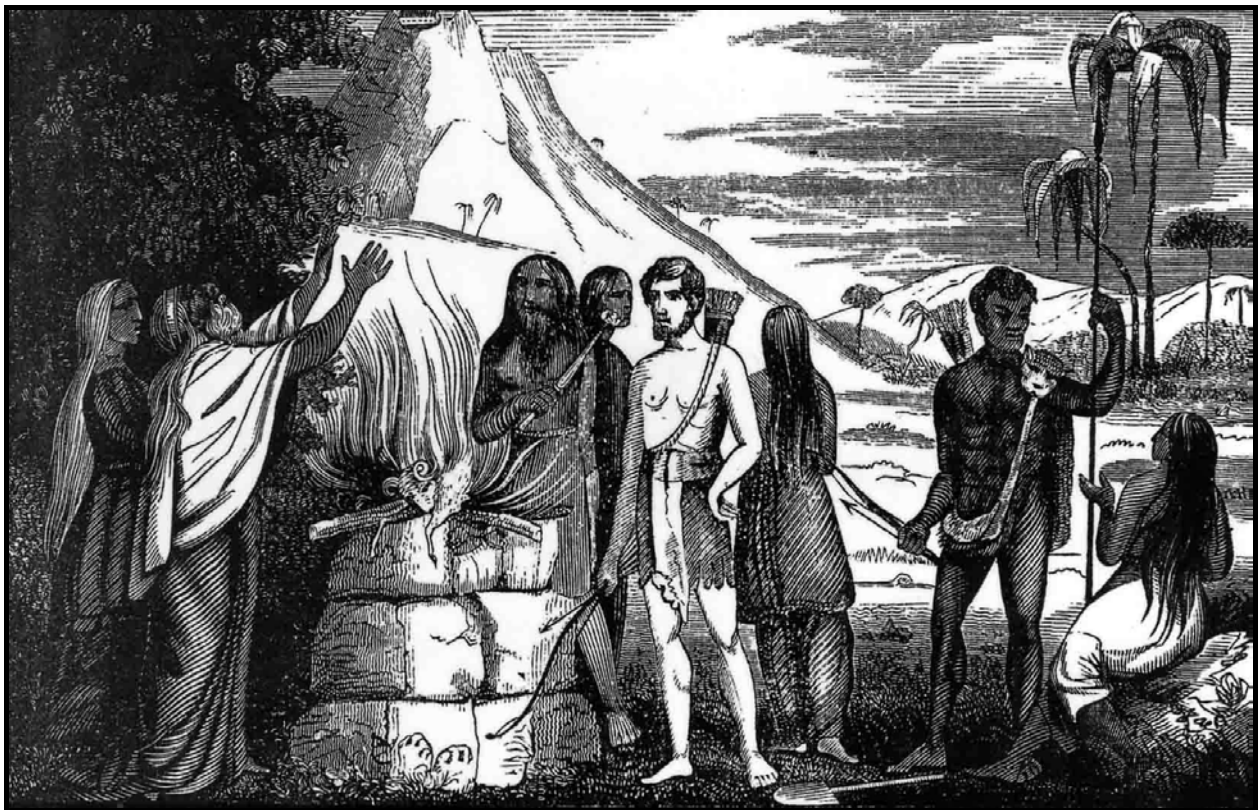
***“He also said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.’*** - The ominous words of the curse are immediately followed by a pronouncement of blessing, not upon Shem himself, but upon ***“the God of Shem.”*** In this way Noah demonstrates his awareness that the blessings which will come upon Shem are the work of God alone. Abraham and his descendants would be included among the progeny of Shem. Thus the verse takes on particular significance. Luther sees messianic portent here, suggesting that the greatest blessing which God would bestow upon Shem was that the promised Savior would come from his line: *“My answer is that this is done because of the excellence of the blessing. For here Noah is speaking not of a material blessing but of the future blessing through the Promised Seed. He sees that this blessing is so great that it cannot be expressed in words.”* (AE, 2, p. 178) In the Hebrew text, the structure and wording of all three phrases in this segment is closely parallel which serves to emphasize the intimate connection between them.

***“May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave.”*** - A final blessing is pronounced upon Japheth, Noah’s remaining son. Noah prays that God might bless the house of Japheth by extending his territory. His prayer that God might ***“extend”*** is a pun based on the name Japheth, based on a form of the same word. He asks that the descendants of Japheth and Shem might live in harmony and peace with one another while the descendants of Canaan are subjected to both of them. The descendants of Japheth did indeed extend their domain, across Asia Minor and on into Europe. Centuries later, as the Gospel of Christ reached across the Gentile world, Noah’s ancient prayer was answered. *“The Japhethites have now largely come in to share Shem’s blessings, for as Gentiles they have been grafted on the good olive tree. Shem’s spiritual heritage is ours. Abraham is become our father in faith and we are his true children.”* (Leupold, p. 353)

The Curse of Ham bears the dubious distinction of having been abused for centuries as a Biblical basis for the enslavement of blacks. No other verse in Scripture has been so flagrantly distorted in defense of pernicious racism. The *“Genesis Raba,”* a compendium of classic rabbinic commentary, includes this obnoxious explanation of the connection between Ham’s sin and the physical appearance of his descendants:

*“When Noah awoke from his wine and became sober, he cried: “Now I cannot beget the fourth son whose children I would have ordered to serve you and your brothers! Therefore, it must be Canaan, your first-*

*born, whom they enslave. And since you have disabled me from doing ugly things in the blackness of the night, Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black! Moreover, because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted into kinks, and their eyes red; again because your lips jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated.' Men of this race are called Negroes; their forefather Canaan commanded them to love theft and fornication, to be banded together in hatred of their Masters and never to tell the truth." (Graves, p. 121)*



*“Noah and His Three Sons” by Josiah Priest - 1843*

*Caption Reads - “On the left is seen Ham and his wife, the parents of the Negro race.”*

The baleful influence of this bigotry on American culture in particular extends well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Writing in 1867, Alexander Crummell, himself the son of emancipated slaves, lamented the pervasive influence of this view in American society:



*“The opinion that the sufferings and the slavery of the Negro race are the consequence of the curse of Noah is a general, almost universal opinion in the Christian world...It is found in books written by learned men, and it is repeated in lectures, speeches, sermons, and common conversation. So strong and tenacious is the hold which it has taken upon the mind of Christendom, that it seems almost impossible to uproot it. Indeed, it is an almost foregone conclusion, that the Negro race is an accursed race, weighed down, even to the present, beneath the burden of an ancestral malediction.”* (Goldenberg, p. 175f.)

Two brief quotations from 19<sup>th</sup> century sermons preached in American Protestant churches will have to suffice as illustrations of the remarkable manner in which this text was twisted and distorted. The first is from a sermon preached by James A. Sloan, a Presbyterian minister, preached in 1857. Rev. Sloan declares:

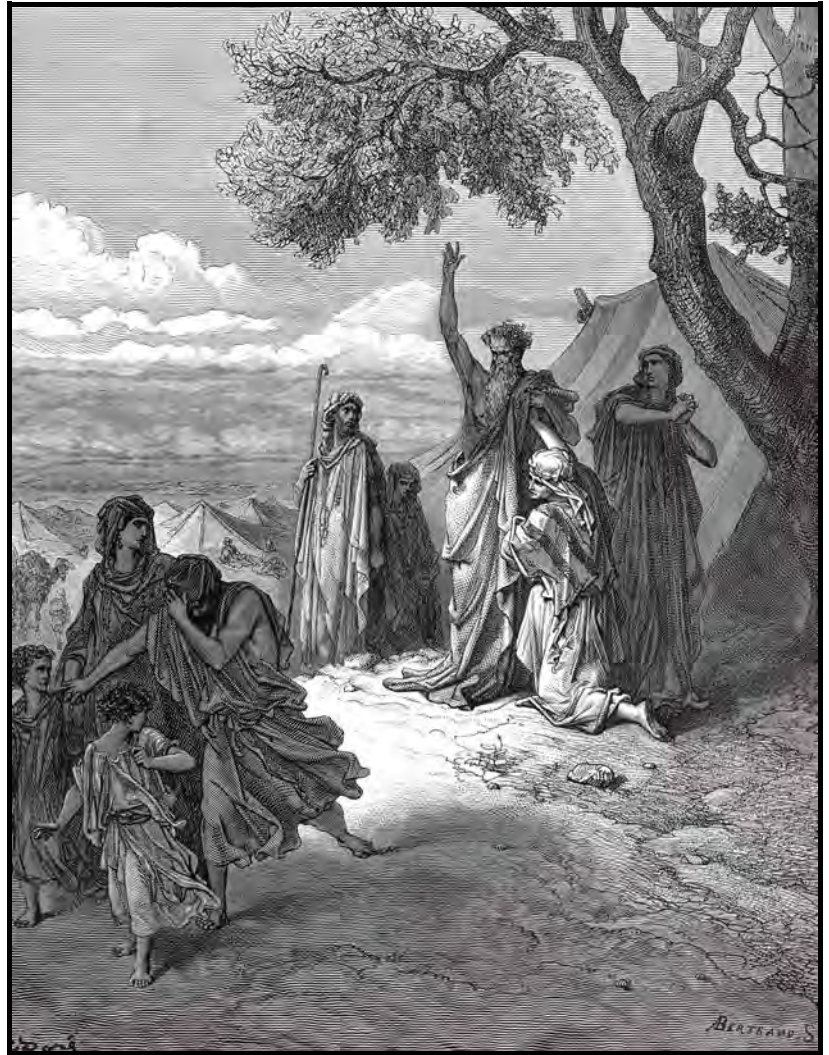
*“Ham deserved death for his unfilial and impious conduct. But the great Lawgiver saw fit, in His good pleasure, not to destroy Ham with immediate death, but to set a mark of degradation on him...All Ham’s posterity are either black or dark colored, and thus bear upon their countenance the mark of inferiority which God put upon their progenitor...Black, restrained, despised, bowed down, are the words used to express the condition and place of Ham’s children. Bearing the mark of degradation on their skin.”* (Goldenberg, p. 176)

Even more grotesque are the observations made by the Rev. Buckner Payne in 1867 as he described the permanent effects of the “curse of Ham”:

*“The curse denounced against him, that a servant of servants he should be unto his brethren; and that this curse was denounced against Ham, for the accidental seeing of his father naked - that this curse was to do so, and did change him, so that instead of being long, straight-haired, high forehead, high nose, thin lips and white, as he then was, and like his brothers Shem and Japheth, he was from that day forth to be kinky headed, low forehead, thick lipped, and black skinned; and that his name and his curse effected all this.”* (Goldenberg, p. 176)

The factual inaccuracies in this view are flagrant. Ham was not cursed. His son

Canaan was cursed. The *“Table of Nations”* in Genesis 10, which describes the posterity of the sons of Noah, clearly indicates that the descendants of Canaan were the Canaanite peoples of Palestine and the Middle East, with no connection at all to the black civilizations of sub-Saharan Africa. There is no reference whatsoever to physical appearance, skin color, or race in the text. The use of this passage to justify racism or black slavery is not simply a matter of differences in exegesis or interpretation but of the most radical eisegesis, that is, inflicting upon the Biblical text concepts and conclusions that are completely absent from it and alien to it. The prominence and persistence of these reprehensible ideas in Western Christianity and culture ought to serve as a humbling reminder of our human capacity to twist and distort the Word of God to support our own preconceived notions and prejudices.

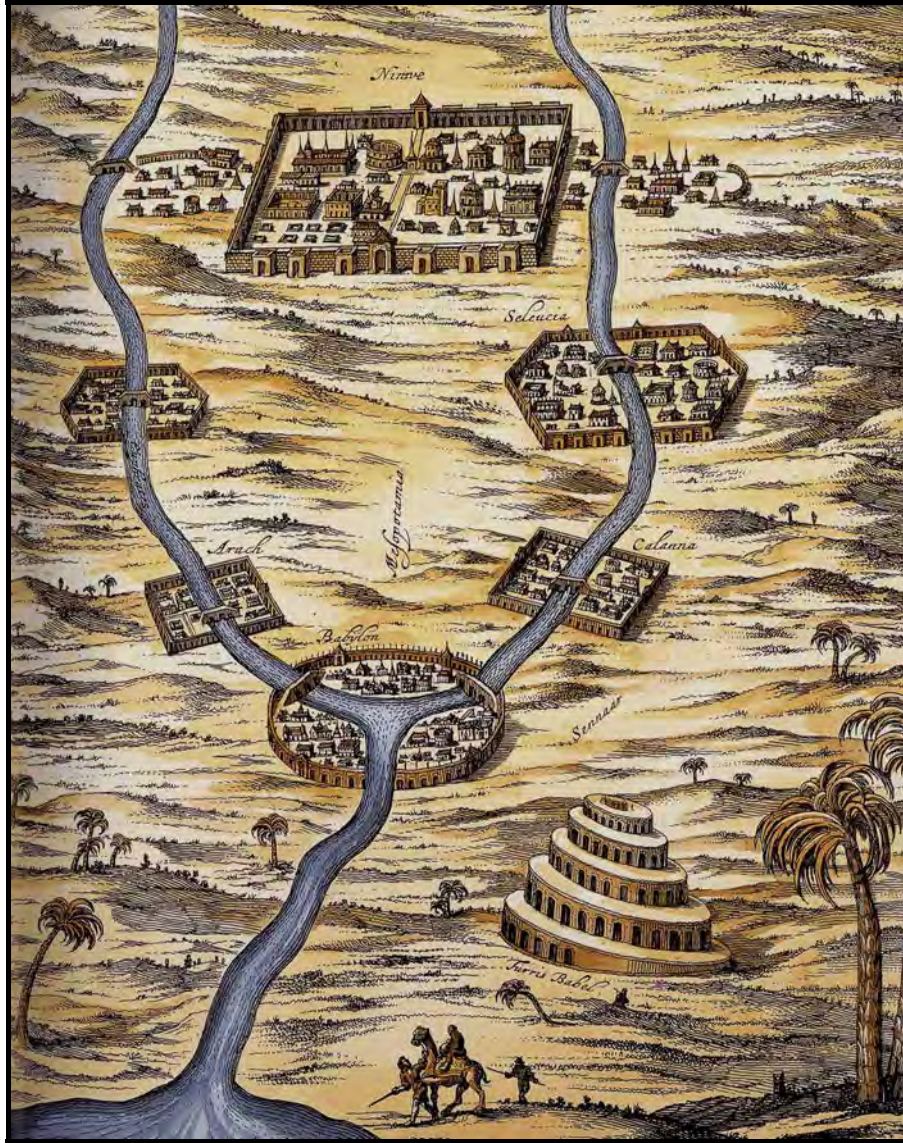


*“The Curse of Canaan” by Gustav Dore’*

***“After the Flood, Noah lived 350 years. Altogether, Noah lived 950 years and then he died.”*** - This troubling segment concludes with a summary description of the life of the patriarch Noah after the Flood. The sentence follows the structure of the earlier genealogical statements of Chapter 5 with the distinction that the dividing point in Noah’s life is not the birth of his first son - as in the earlier pattern - but the Flood. *“When his time came, he died like all other people. According to the Mesopotamian myths, the gods raised the hero of the Flood to the status of a deity and endowed him with eternal life. The Torah is absolutely opposed to any such idea.”* (Cassuto, p.172)

# Genesis Chapter 10

## The Table of Nations



*“The Cities of Nimrod” - 17<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Engraving*

### *Verse 1*

*This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah’s sons, who themselves had sons after the Flood.*

***“This is the account of...”*** - The text signals the beginning of the next segment of human history with the characteristic *“toledoth”* formula, ***“This is the account of,”*** literally, *“these are the generations of.”* This is mankind’s new beginning. The clear intent of the author is to demonstrate how God’s original blessing ***“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”*** (Genesis 1:28; cf. 9:1) is reinstated in the aftermath of the Flood. The unity of the human race, all of which originates in one of the three sons of Noah is also affirmed, along with the ongoing implementation of God’s plan of salvation for humanity, which now focuses on the descendants of Shem. Even the obstinate rebellion and opposition of sinful men, as illustrated by the erection of the Tower of Babel and the dispersal of the nations in the next chapter, cannot frustrate God’s saving purpose.

### ***Verses 2-5***

***The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Mesech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah. The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim, and the Rodanim. (From these the maritime peoples spread out in their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)***

***“The sons of Japheth”*** - The information in this chapter is presented in the form of a *“segmented”* genealogy, that is, a family history which lists all of the offspring of each of the patriarch, rather than following one particular line down through the generations (*“linear”* genealogy). The genealogy includes a total of seventy individuals/nations, excluding Nimrod who is not listed as the father of a nation but as a unique individual (14 Japhethites, 30 Hamites, 26 Shemites). In Biblical numerology, the number seventy (10 x 7) represents totality. Thus the 70 nations here signify the whole world and all of its peoples. Jesus alludes to this in Luke 10 when He dispatches the 70 disciples throughout the entire land of Israel (cf. Luke 10:1-16).

The genealogy is grouped into three parts, one for each of the three sons of Noah. The conclusion of each group is indicated by a reference to their ***“clans,” “languages,” “territories,”*** and ***“nations.”*** (Cf. Genesis 10:5, 20, 31). The order in which the sons are listed - Japheth, Ham, Shem - is reversed from its earlier occurrences (cf. Genesis 5:32; 6:10; 9:18) to highlight the genealogy of Shem and bracket the Tower of Babel narrative within Shem’s family history. The descendants of Shem are of primary importance because this is the family line from which the promised Messiah will come. This chapter becomes the transition to the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which will occupy the remainder of the Book of Genesis.

**“Japheth”** was the second son born to Noah. He is listed first here, not for reasons of prominence, but, on the contrary, to dispense with him and his offspring since they are of the least significance to the nation of Israel, and therefore the plan of salvation. The list includes seven sons and seven grandsons. As will continue to be the case throughout the list, the identification of these names with specific nations is difficult and often controversial.



*“The Destruction of the Hosts of Gog and Magog”  
Woodcut from the 1530 Edition of Luther’s Bible*

**“Gomer”** refers to the Cimmerians who originally lived north of the Black Sea in the Ukraine. In the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., they moved south through the Caucasus Mountains to invade and terrorize eastern Asia Minor. Ezekiel refers to **“Gomer”** among the hordes of Israel’s northern enemies: *“Also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops - the many nations with you.”* (Ezekiel 38:6)

**“Magog”** also appears in Ezekiel 38 and 39 (Ezekiel 38:2; 39:6) and would come to be immortalized in Revelation 20 in infamous combination with **“Gog”** as representative of all of the forces of evil in this world: *“When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth - Gog*

*and Magog - to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.*" (Revelation 20:7-8) The name is unknown in extra-Biblical sources. The context in Ezekiel suggests a location in the far north, southern Russia or central Asia. The "*Madai*" are the Medes who lived in the mountains northeast of Mesopotamia in what is now Iran. The Medes were closely allied with the Persians and participated in the establishment of their empire late in the Old Testament era (cf. Isaiah 13:17; 21:2; Jeremiah 51:11,28). "*Javan*" is the ancestor of the Ionian Greeks who settled southern Greece and western Asia Minor around the Aegean Sea. The Old Testament characteristically associated them with "*Tubal*" and "*Meshech*," the next two names in the listing of the Table of Nations. Ezekiel describes them as slave traders and dealers in vessels of bronze (cf. Ezekiel 27:13; 32:26; 38:2; 39:1). "*Tubal*" recalls "*Tubal Cain*," the son of Lamech and Zillah (Genesis 4:22). Assyrian documents speak of two nations in Asia Minor, "*Tabal*" and "*Mushku*" who are designated as the "*Tibarenoi*" and the "*Moschoi*" by the Greek historian Herodotus. These are, no doubt, references to the Bible's "*Tubal*" and "*Meshech*." "*Tiras*" is the final son of Japheth included on the list. Again, the name is unknown outside of this Biblical reference. Some connect it to the Etruscans (Greek - *Tyrsenoi*) of central Italy and others to the Thracians of northern Greece.

Three of the sons of Gomer are included in the list. "*Ashkenaz*" appears in the records of the Assyrian Empire as the "*Ashkuzai*." The Greeks called them "*Scythians*." They were an Indo-European people nomadic people, expert horsemen and archers. They inhabited the area between the Black and the Caspian Seas. Periodically they would migrate south devastating the civilized nations in their path and then withdrawing back toward the vast steppes of southern Russia. Jeremiah 51:27 lists them among the barbaric horsemen whom the Lord will raise up to execute His judgment upon Babylon:

***"Lift up a banner in the land! Blow the trumpet among the nations!  
Prepare the nations for battle against her; summon against her these  
kingdoms: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz. Appoint a commander  
against her; send up horses like a swarm of locusts."***

Hebrew tradition identifies "*Ashkenaz*" with the Germans and German Jews have traditionally used this title in reference to themselves. The name "*Riphath*" remains something of a mystery. It does not appear elsewhere in Scripture, nor in the records of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. "*Togarmah*" occurs in Ezekiel 27:14 and 38:6 among the enemies of the people of God from the far north. "*Cunieform texts from*

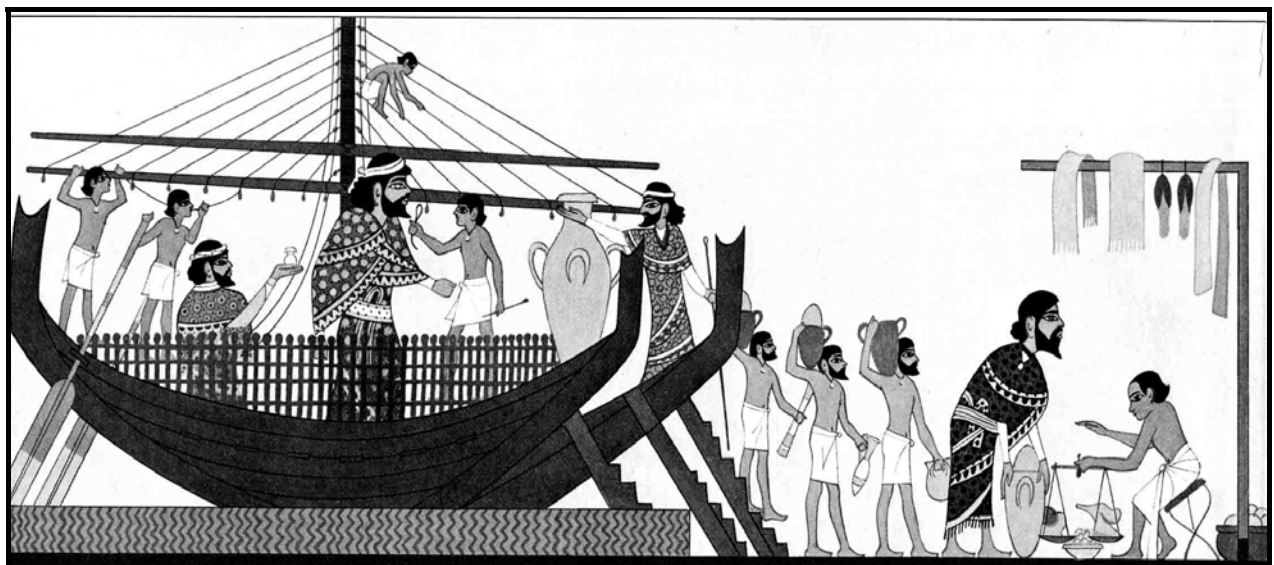
*the 19<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E. on frequently mentioned the city and district of Tegarma, which lay north of Carchemesh and Haran along an important trade route that led from Assyria to Cappadocia in Asia Minor.” (Sarna, p. 71)*



*“Scythian Horsemen in Battle” by Michael A. Hampshire*

Four sons of Javan are included in the listing of Japheth’s second generation. We identified Javan as the ancestor of the Ionian Greeks who settled the Aegean Sea basin. That focus continues among his sons. **“Elishah”** is a Hebrew rendition of the name **“Alashiya”** which occurs frequently in ancient documents as the designation for the island of Cyprus. Ezekiel 27:7 refers to fine cloth of blue and purple that comes

from *“the coasts of Elishah.”* The problem in the identification of *“Tarshish”* comes in linking this frequently used Old Testament designation with a particular Mediterranean coastal port city. 1 Kings 10:22 reports that great Solomon had at his disposal *“a fleet of ships of Tarshish along with the ships of Hiram.”* Ezekiel 27:12 identifies Tarshish as a center of mining and trade: *“Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of goods; they exchanged silver, iron, tin, and lead for your merchandise.”* In the days of the divided kingdom, King Jehoshaphat of Judah allied himself with the wicked King Ahaziah of Israel to send a fleet of ships from the port of Ezion Geber in the Red Sea to Tarshish to trade for gold. The venture floundered when God caused the ships to sink in a storm (2 Chronicles 20:35-37; 1 Kings 22:49) Two Mediterranean coastal cities bear names that resemble Tarshish. The first is Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia in Asia Minor, and later the home of apostle Paul. This is the best known of the two but this city was never associated with mining or the export of metals. Tartessus, on the Iberian Peninsula west of the Straits of Gibraltar, was a well-known mining center in the ancient world. If this is the Bible’s Tarshish, then it is the site most distant from Palestine in the Table of Nations. The *“Kittim”* are the people of the Greek city of Kition (present day Larnaca) on the southeast coast of the island of Cyprus. The term occurs regularly in the Old Testament for the island of Cyprus in connection with ships and trading. For example, in his prophecy of the city of Tyre’s destruction, Isaiah warned: *“Wail, O ships of Tarshish! For Tyre is destroyed and left without house or harbor. From the land of Kittim word has come to them...Up, cross over to Kittim; even there you will find no rest.”* (Isaiah 23:1,12; cf. Numbers 24:24; Jeremiah 2:10; Ezekiel 27:6). From the



*“A Greek Trading Vessel Unloading Cargo” - 14<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Egyptian Tomb Mural*



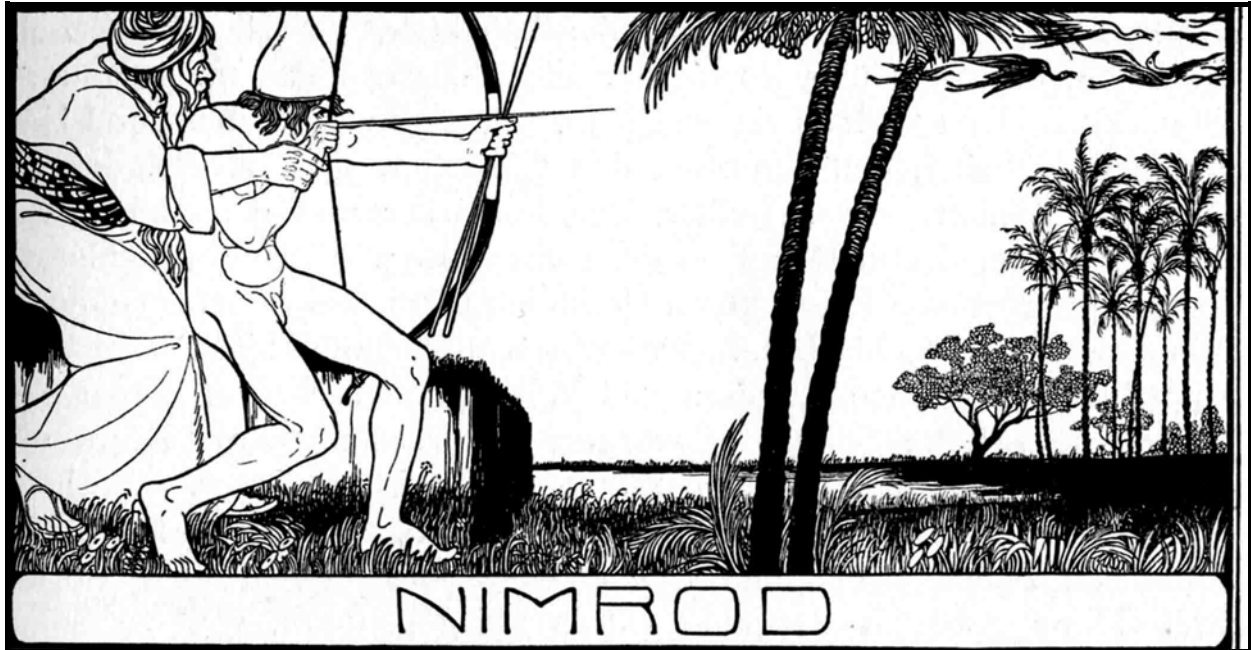
fourth of Javan's sons come the "**Rhodanim**" which is usually understood as a reference to the Aegean island of Rhodes, southwest of Asia Minor. Rhodes was a Greek colony, which would be consistent with the other names on the list.

***"From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language."*** - This summary statement concludes the list of the descendants of Japheth. As previously noted, this pattern will continue with the lists of Ham and Shem's descendants. In this instance opens with a word play on the name "**Japheth**" which is based on a Hebrew verb which means "*to extend*" or "*to enlarge.*" When Japheth's descendants "**spread out**" across the Mediterranean basin they were simply doing what their father and founder's name had indicated that they would do. The language indicates an ongoing expansion which both preceded and followed the events surrounding the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues which are described in the following chapter. The family of Japheth are seamen, settling on islands and coastal regions, making their living from trade and exploration. Hence the text correctly characterizes them as "***the maritime peoples.***"

### ***Verses 6-20***

***The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. Cush was the father of Nimrod who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord." The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; that is, the great city. Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites. Canaan was the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites. Later the Canaanite clans scattered and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the descendants of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.***

***"The sons of Ham..."*** - The listing of the nations continues with the descendants of



*“Nimrod the Hunter” Bible Illustration by E. M. Lilien*

Ham. These nations will have a more direct impact upon the nation of Israel and are therefore presented and discussed in greater detail. The listing begins with the four sons of Ham - **“Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.”** Among their descendants are included most of Israel’s traditional enemies, those who conquered and oppressed the children of Abraham.

**“Cush”** is a designation which occurs frequently in the Old Testament. It would seem that Scripture knows of at least three different lands of Cush, one in Africa, one in Mesopotamia, and one in Midian. The term generally refers to the Egyptian province of Nubia, between the second and fourth cataracts of the Nile, to the south of the Egyptian heartland. Today, this region is the northern part of the nation of Sudan. The Greek Septuagint offers the misleading translation of Ethiopia - which is significantly farther south and east - for the Hebrew **“Cush.”** The identification of Cush with Nubia can be clearly observed in the writings of the prophet Isaiah who described the ancient empire of Egypt as **“from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush.”** (Isaiah 11:11) and offered this grim prediction of the kingdom’s downfall:

***“Just as My servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of***

***Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared - to Egypt's shame. Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be afraid and put to shame.*** (Isaiah 20: 3-5)

There are also a number of instances where “**Cush**” appears to be associated with Mesopotamia. The first reference to Cush in the Old Testament, occurs in the description of the Garden of Eden where four rivers define the borders of the Garden: “**The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.**” (Genesis 2:13) Two of the other rivers mentioned are the Tigris and the

Euphrates, the great rivers of Mesopotamia (Genesis 2:14). The connection between Cush and Mesopotamia is reinforced here in Genesis 10 with the observation that Cush was the father of Nimrod who is described as the founder of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires and the original builder of their great cities (Genesis 10:8-12). Historians point to the old Sumerian capital of “*Kish*” or the “*Kassite*” culture northeast of Babylon as the origin of the term Cush in the context of Mesopotamia. Finally, a third variation is suggested by the prophet Habakkuk who locates “**the tents of Cushan**” with the land of Midian in the Sinai Peninsula (Habakkuk 3:7). This identification would also help to explain the puzzling incident in Numbers 12 where Aaron and Miriam attack



***“Nimrod In Babylon” 12<sup>th</sup> Century French Bible Illumination***

Moses for having married a “*Cushite wife*” (Numbers 12:1-2; cf. also 2 Chronicles 14:9-15) for we know that Moses married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the sheik of Midian (Exodus 2:21-22).

“*Mizraim,*” the second son of Ham, is the kingdom of Egypt. The Hebrew title is in the plural, literally “*the two Egypts,*” thus referring to the combination of upper and lower Egypt. Thus the Psalmist recalls the death of the firstborn with these words: “*He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.*” (Psalm 78:51) The land of Palestine remained within Egypt’s sphere of influence throughout most of the early Old Testament era. During the times of Egypt’s strength, it was a formal province of the empire, while during periods of Egypt’s decline local rulers were able to shake off their status as vassals of the pharaoh and exercise a greater degree of independence.

The specific identity of “*Put,*” Ham’s third son, is somewhat less clear. Most scholars agree with the Septuagint’s equation of Put with the nation of Lybia, on the north African coast to the west of Egypt. Other references to Put in the Old Testament seem to support a location on the African coast near Egypt. Jeremiah describes the forces which will conquer Egypt as follows: “*March on, O warriors - men of Cush and Put who carry shields, men of Lydia who draw the bow. But that day belongs to the Lord, the Lord Almighty - a day of vengeance, for vengeance on His foes.*” (Jeremiah 46:9-10) Ezekiel mentions Put as an ally of Egypt who will share in her downfall (Ezekiel 30:5), and as a provider of mercenary soldiers in the wars against Tyre and Gog (Ezekiel 27:10; 38:5). The name also occurs in a number of extra-Biblical Babylonian and Persian documents in reference to Lybia.

The fourth and final son of Ham is “*Canaan.*” The crucial role in the future of Israel by this man’s descendants has already been foreshadowed by his prominence in the aftermath of Noah’s drunkenness (Genesis 9:24). The nations that come from Canaan will also figure prominently in the remainder of this genealogy (vss.15-20). Both in the Bible itself and in the extra-Biblical sources, the terms “*Canaan*” and “*Canaanite*” are used in reference to a sometimes bewildering variety of peoples. Kenneth Matthews summarizes the usage in this way:

*“The term overlaps with many diverse peoples who inhabited Syro-Palestine. ‘Canaan,’ for example, refers to the peoples inhabiting the plains and the Jordan Valley...On the other hand, ‘Canaan’ can refer to a variety of peoples living in proximity. This is the case with Esau’s*

wives, who are said to be from ‘the women of Canaan’ and include a Hittite, a Hivite, and an Ishmaelite (Genesis 36:2-3). This fluidity is reflected by Ezekiel’s commentary on Israel’s beginnings, ‘Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother was a Hittite.’ (Ezekiel 16:3) Canaan as a people or location also commonly fluctuates with the term ‘Amorites’ (cf. e.g. Genesis 15:16; Joshua 24:15-18; Judges 6:10; 1 Samuel 7:14; Amos 2:10).” (Matthews, p. 446)

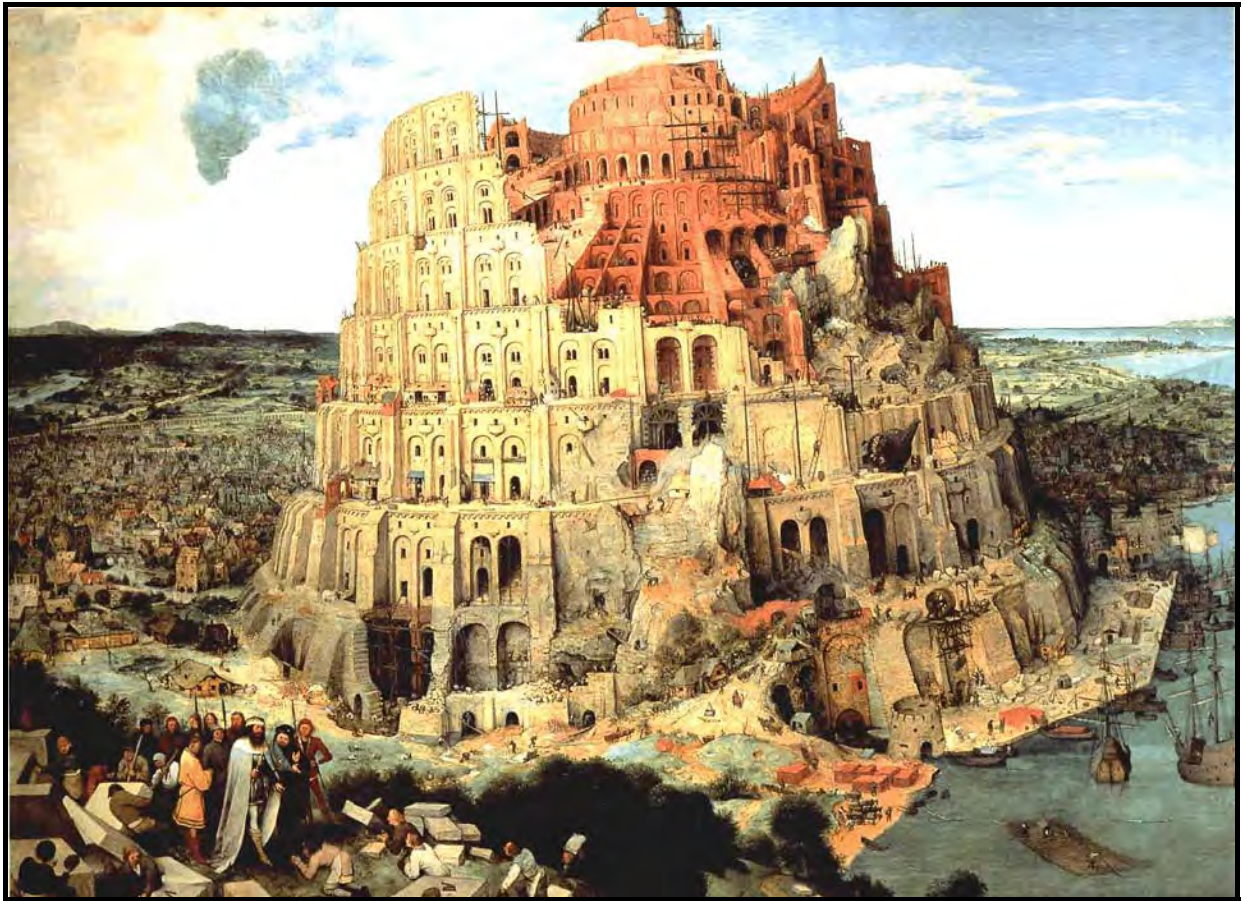
**“The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.”** - Cassutto sums up our difficulty in deciphering these often obscure names: “All of the names of the sons of Cush are those of Arabian tribes, or Arabian places, apparently in north Arabia. The attempts made to identify them exactly are mere conjectures.” (Cassutto, p. 199) **“Seba”** is mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament but never specifically identified. In Psalm 72, Solomon illustrates the influence and power of the righteous king whom God will raise up by saying: **“The kings of Tarshish and of the distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.”** (Psalm 72:10) Isaiah links Seba to Egypt and Cush: **“For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.”** (Isaiah 43:3). Both the ancient Greek historian Herodotus and Josephus report that Seba was the name of the ancient capital of the kingdom of Ethiopia. **“Havilah”** is mentioned in the description of the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 2:11). It also occurs later in this genealogy among the descendants of Shem (cf. 10:29).

*“Havilah was a region rich in gold (2:11). It was the territory in which Ishmael and his descendants lived (“from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt” 25:18). The Amalekites living “from Havilah to Shur” were vanquished by Saul (1 Samuel 15:7). All this evidence points to some location in Arabia.”* (Hamilton, p. 336)

**“Sabtah”** and **“Sabtecah”** are typically understood as unknown sites somewhere in the southern portion of the Arabian peninsula. **“Raamah”** is mentioned among the kingdoms of Arabia in Ezekiel’s lament over the downfall of the King of Tyre:

**“Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your customers; they did business with you in lambs, rams, and goats. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; for your merchandise they exchanged**

*the finest of all kinds of spices and precious stones and gold.” (Ezekiel 27:21-22)*



*“Nimrod Supervising the Construction of the Tower of Babel” by Pieter Bruegel*

*“Cush was the father Nimrod who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth.”* - The family history is interrupted at this point to insert a more detailed account of the exploits and accomplishments of *“Nimrod.”* If the name is of Hebrew origin, it is apparently based on the verb *“marad”* which means *“to rebel.”* It, as is more probable, the name is derived from Mesopotamian sources, it is derived from the name of *“Ninurta,”* the Babylonian god of war. *“Ninurta”* was hailed by the Babylonians as *“the Arrow, the Mighty Hero.”* In similar language, the Biblical text reports that Nimrod *“grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.”* His renown was so widespread that it became proverbial among men: *“That is why it is said, ‘Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.’”* Nimrod is credited with the establishment of the great cities which became the cradle of

Mesopotamian civilization. ***“The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh in Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen which is between Nineveh and Calah; that***



***“The Ishtar Gate of Ancient Babylon”  
Reconstructed at the State Museum in Berlin***

***is the great city.”*** Two clusters of major metropolitan centers are cited. The first on the plains of Shinar. This is the heartland of Mesopotamia, site of the ancient kingdoms of Sumer and Akkad. The same location will be identified in Chapter 11:2 as the place where the Tower of Babel was constructed - ***“As men moved eastward they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.”*** ***“Amraphel king of Shinar”*** was one of the rulers defeated by Abraham when he rescued his nephew Lot (Genesis 14:1,9). Among the plunder stolen by Aachen after the fall of Jericho was ***“a beautiful robe from Shinar.”*** (Joshua 7:21). The prophet Isaiah promises that when the Messiah reclaims His scattered people He will gather them ***“from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.”*** (Isaiah 11:11)

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, captured the golden

vessels of the Temple in Jerusalem: ***“These he carried off to the temple of his god in Shinar and put in the treasure house of his god.”*** (Daniel 1:2) Most modern Bible translations equate Shinar with Babylonia. This region was located in what is now the southern portion of Iraq.



*“The Fall of Babylon” 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Engraving*

The great city of **“Babylon”** is listed first among the metropolitan centers of Nimrod in the position of prominence and priority. Babylon may well have been the most famous city of the ancient world. It was legendary for its beauty and majesty. When mighty Nebuchadnezzar gazed upon his capital he was moved to boast: **“Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”** (Daniel 4:30). Mesopotamian mythology asserted that the city had originally been designed and built by the gods themselves in honor of the chief god Marduk. Ancient Babylon was located on the banks of the Euphrates River about fifty miles south of the modern city of Baghdad. At the height of its glory, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.) the central city covered an area of 3.8 square miles which made it the largest city in the world at that time. The city was surrounded by a moat and a towering double wall built out of bricks. The wall was so broad that chariots could race abreast along its top. The focal point of the wall was the magnificent **“Ishtar Gate,”** named for Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love



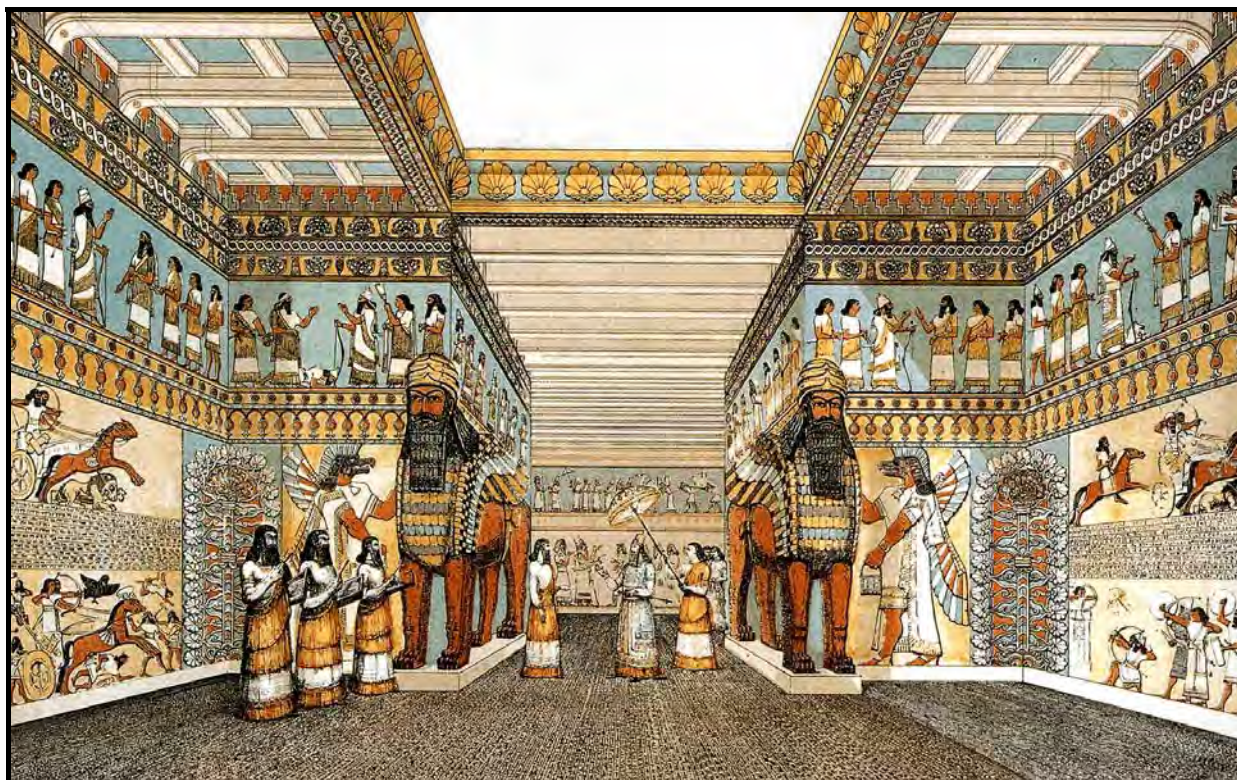
and war. The gate was 38 feet tall and was covered with gleaming blue glazed tiles which depicted the reliefs of 575 images of dragons and bulls. Among the city's architectural high points were the world renowned "*Hanging Gardens of Babylon*" and the massive ziggurat temple of the chief god, Marduk. This step pyramid was over 300 feet tall.

**"Erech,"** is the ancient city of "*Uruk,*" another center of Sumerian civilization during the 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium B.C. Its ruins are now located about 160 miles southeast of Baghdad. The Sumerian King List gives this city as the seat of the second dynasty of kings after the flood, the third monarch of which was the famous Gilgamesh. "**Akkad**" became the center of the Kingdom of the same name, founded by the conqueror Sargon around 2300 B.C. "**Calneh in Shinar**" is the only name on this list which does not appear anywhere else in Scripture or in any extra-Biblical Sumerian or Babylonian documents. As a result, its specific identification remains problematic.

**"From that land he went to Assyria..."** - As if the establishment of every major metropolitan center in Babylonia were not enough, the text goes on to extend Nimrod's influence into the northern region of Assyria as well. This view is reflected



**"Nineveh at the Height of Her Glory" by James Fergusson**



*“The Great Hall of the Royal Palace at Nineveh” by Layard*

in the prophecy of Micah who refers to Assyria as *“the land of Nimrod.”* (Micah 5:6). The designation *“Assyria”* (literally - *“Asshur”*) refers to the entire region of the Upper Mesopotamian plain. The Assyrian Empire, based in the cities of Nineveh and Asshur, ruled the ancient Near East from Egypt to Persia until its final defeat by Nebuchadnezzar at the pivotal battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. The Assyrians were renown as brutal warriors who rejoiced in the bloody destruction of those who dared to oppose them. Ashurnasirpal I, who ascended to the throne of Assyria in 883 B.C., boasted of the cruelty of his conquests in these chilling words:

*“I destroyed them, tore down the wall, and burned the town with fire; I caught the survivors and impaled them on stakes in front of their own towns...Pillars of skulls I erected in front of the town...I fed their corpses, cut into little pieces to dogs, pigs, vultures...I slowly tore off their skin...Of some I cut off the hands and limbs; of others, the noses, ears and arms; of many soldiers I put out the eyes...I flayed them and covered the walls of the town with their skins...The heads of their warriors I cut off, and I formed them into a pillar over against their city; their young men and maidens I burned in the fire...Three thousand captives I burned*

*with fire; I left not a single one alive to serve as a hostage.”* (DeCamp, pp. 85-86)

**“Rehoboth Ir”** literally means *“the broad places of the city.”* In this instance it seems to refer to one of the suburbs of the Nineveh, on the northeastern side of the capital city. **“Calah”** is the famous Assyrian city of *“Kalah”* at present day *“Nimrud”* on the west bank of the Tigris River, south of Nineveh. For a brief time, under Emperor Shalmaneser I, this city served as the capital of the Assyrian Empire. **“Resen”** is presently unidentified. The name does not occur elsewhere in the Bible or in the ancient records. The text indicates that it was located between Calah and **“the great city”** of Nineveh.

### **Verses 13-14**

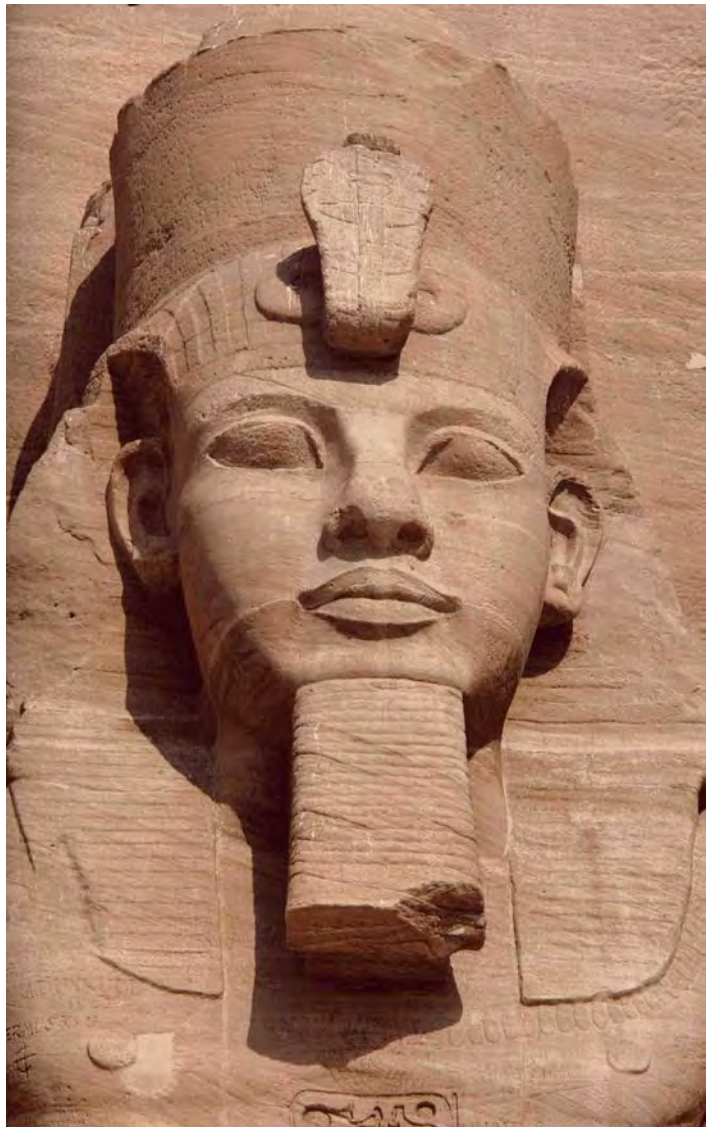
***Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and the Caphtorites.”***

**“Mizraim was the father of..”** - After the extended digression to trace the impact of the great Cushite hero Nimrod, the Table of Nations returns to its listing of the sons of Ham. Next in the sequence are the descendants of **“Mizraim”** (Egypt - cf. vs. 6). Seven nations are listed as coming from Mizraim. All seven names are Hebrew plural nouns (Note the *“im”* endings on each one.). The first in the sequence are **“the Ludites.”** This nation is also listed in conjunction with the African allies of Egypt in Jeremiah 46:9 and Ezekiel 30:5. In both of these texts, the NIV incorrectly translates the Hebrew word as *“the Lydians,”* referring to the people of western Asia Minor identified by the Greeks as Lydians.

***“Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers of surging waters. She says, ‘I will rise and cover the earth; I will destroy cities and their people.’ Charge, O horses! Drive furiously O charioteers! March on O warriors - men of Cush and Put who carry shields, men of Lydia who draw the bow.”*** (Jeremiah 46:9)

***“Cush and Put, Lydia and all of Arabia and Libya and the people of the covenant land will fall by the sword along with Egypt. This is what the Lord says, ‘The allies of Egypt will fall and her proud strength will fail.’”*** (Ezekiel 30:5-6)

Neither of these texts indicate the origin of the **“Ludites.”** Another **“Lud”** is listed among the sons of Shem later in this chapter (cf. Genesis 10:24). A connection between this **“Lud”** and the Lydians of Asia Minor seems more plausible. In the absence of clarification from sources outside of the Bible, the identity of the African **“Ludites”** must remain unknown. The **“Anamites”** are similarly mysterious. John Albright, the noted Old Testament scholar, suggested an identification with the district around the city of Cyrene in North Africa. In the absence of conclusive evidence, such suggestions must remain speculative. Next on the list are the **“Lehabites.”** This group is generally linked to the Lybians, tribes that lived west of Egypt along the coast and on the fringes of the Sahara Desert who are also referred to as the **“Lubim”** in the Old Testament (cf. Daniel 11:43; Nahum 3:9). **“Naphthuhites”** is derived from an Egyptian word which means **“the north land.”** This would suggest a location in the Nile Delta, in Lower Egypt, on the northern end of the country. The unification of Upper and Lower Egypt into a single nation was a pivotal event in the history of this most ancient civilization, commemorated throughout the empire’s long rule by the double crown of the pharaohs’ which combined the crowns of both kingdoms into one. The Upper Kingdom was designated by the Hebrew word **“Pathros,”** which means **“the southern land.”** The term occurs in Jeremiah 44:1,15 - **“This word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in Lower Egypt - in Migdol, Tahpanhes, and Memphis - and in Upper Egypt (Hebrew - “Pathros”)...and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt**



**“Ramses the Great Wearing the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt” from Abu Simbel**

(Hebrew - "*Pathros*"). Ezekiel describes the land of Pathros as the original home of all the people of Egypt: "*At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Pathros, the land of their ancestors.*" (Ezekiel 29:13-14) Thus, the "*Pathrusites*" are the inhabitants of the land of Pathros, the people of Upper Egypt.



*"Philistine Warriors in Battle" by Gertrude Levy*

The final pair of nations among the descendants of Mizraim - the "*Cashluhites*" and the "*Caphtorites*" appear to be linked together. They are particularly important because of their connection to the "*Philistines*" who will play a major role in the history of Israel. The identity of the "*Cashluhites*" is unknown. This title does not occur elsewhere. The "*Caphtorites,*" on the other hand, are clearly identified with the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean. This is consistent with the other Old

Testament which indicate that the Philistines originated in Crete. Through the prophet Amos, the Lord declares: ***“Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir?”*** (Amos 9:7). Jeremiah also identifies Crete as the Philistine’s point of origin as he foretells the destruction of that nation: ***“For the day has come to destroy the Philistines and to cut off all survivors who could help Tyre and Sidon. The Lord is about to destroy the Philistines, the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor.”*** (Jeremiah 47:4) The Philistines were among the infamous Sea Peoples who invaded the coasts of Egypt in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. The designation of the land of Israel as *“Palestine”* is derived from their name. The Philistines settled on the southern coast of Palestine, establishing a powerful confederation of five cities - Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. Each of the cities was ruled by its own *“Lord,”* while they would work together in close cooperation to deal with any external threat. The gods of the Philistines included Dagon (Judges 16:23; 1 Samuel 5:1-7), Ashtoreth, and Baalzebub (1 Kings 1:1-16). The Philistine confederation posed a major threat to the nation of Israel throughout the period of the Judges and well into the era of the united monarchy. They remain an identifiable presence in the land throughout the remainder of the Old Testament and into the days of the Maccabees. The most dramatic confrontations between Israelite champions and the Philistines occurred in the days of Sampson, who was brought down by the wily Philistine temptress Delilah, and David, who defeated the great Philistine warrior Goliath.

### ***Verses 15-20***

***Canaan was the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites. Later the Canaanite clans scattered and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the descendants of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.***

***“Canaan was the father of Sidon, his firstborn...”*** - The list omits ***“Put,”*** Ham’s third son (cf. vs. 6) and proceeds directly to Canaan, the fourth and final descendant of Ham. Canaan’s descendants are the largest group among the Hamites, including a total of eleven nations. The significance of the descendants of Canaan for the Biblical narrative and the future of the people of Israel who will settle in the land of Canaan is evident from the attention devoted to this cluster of nations, although the nations listed extend well beyond the borders of Canaan itself.

The first name on the list of Canaan's descendants is "***Sidon***," the famous Phoenician port city on the Mediterranean coast of the modern nation of Lebanon. Throughout Old Testament history, the allied cities of Tyre and Sidon maintained commercial empires that spanned the Mediterranean world. The absence of Tyre on this list suggests an early date, well before the 12<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. when the fame of Tyre equaled and ultimately eclipsed that of Sidon. The importance of Sidon is signaled by his unique designation as the "***firstborn***" son of Canaan.



***"The Guardian at the Gate"  
Stone Relief from the Palace of the Hittite Kings at  
Boghasköy in Central Turkey***

The "***Hittites***" appear next among the sons of Canaan. The Hittites were an Indo-European people who settled in central Asia Minor around 1800 B.C. In the centuries that followed, the Hittites established an empire which became a major power in the eastern Mediterranean region, until it was eclipsed by the Assyrians after 1200 B.C. The magnificent horsemen and charioteers of the Hittite army, some 40,000 strong, stopped the Egyptian host of Pharaoh Ramses II at the crucial battle of Kadesh in 1275 B.C. Syria and Palestine were within the Hittite sphere of influence, and in times of strength were, in fact, provinces of the Hittite empire. In Genesis 23, Abraham purchases a plot of land for the burial of Sarah from Ephron the Hittite, acknowledging his people as the owners of the land of Canaan: "***Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. He said, 'I am an alien and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here***

*so I can bury my dead.*” (Genesis 23:3) Isaac’s son Esau married Hittite wives, much to the chagrin of his mother Rebekah (Genesis 27:46). Later, Uriah the Hittite was the loyal captain of King David’s army who was sacrificed so that the King could take his wife Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). Ezekiel acknowledged the contribution of the Hittites to the original establishment of the city of Jerusalem: **“This is what the sovereign Lord says to Jerusalem: ‘Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.’**” (Ezekiel 16:2).

The **“Jebusites”** were the Canaanite tribe that held the city of **“Jebus”** in the hill country of Judah in the early days of the Israelite monarchy. They are mentioned in the spies report to Moses: **“The Amalakites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.”** (Numbers 13:29) The Jebusites believed that their mountain fortress was impregnable and could be defended **“by the blind and the lame.”** In fact they had successfully defended their citadel against all assaults until the city was finally taken by David, who made it his capital and renamed it Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-10). The plot of ground upon which the Temple was ultimately built was purchased by David from Araunah the Jebusite (2 Samuel 24:18-25).

The **“Amorites”** were a west Semitic people who began migrating from the Syrian desert into the green lands of the Fertile Crescent around 2000 B.C. The Babylonians identified them with the term **“amurru”** which means **“west.”** The famous King Hammurabi, who devised one of civilization’s first law codes was of Amorite descent. The Bible uses the term Amorites in reference to a specific ethnic group among the tribes of Palestine the settled in the mountains on both sides of the Jordan River. The land on the east of Jordan was **“Amorite territory”** under the control of **“Sihon king of the Amorites.”** (Numbers 21:10-35). The term Amorites is also used in a more general sense to describe all of the Canaanite tribes that inhabited the land. Thus, when God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, He foretold a 400 year period of bondage before they could take possession of it **“for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”** (Genesis 15:16)

Little is known about the **“Girgashites”** other than that they were among the Canaanite peoples who were overcome by the Israelites when they entered the land. Their name is commonly included on the lists of Canaanite tribes whom the Israelites conquered (cf. Genesis 15:21; Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 3:10; 24:11). The same is true of the **“Hivites,”** although a number of specific individuals are identified as



Hivites in the Old Testament. For example, Shechem, who was responsible for the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, is identified as *"the son of Hamor, the Hivite, ruler of that area."* (Genesis 34:2).

The next five names on the list refer to a cluster of Phoenician towns in Syria and Lebanon. *"Arkites"* are the citizens of the city of Arka, a coastal port in Lebanon, about 13 miles northeast of Tripoli. The *"Sinites"* lived in the nearby city of Siyanu which had also been founded by Phoenician traders. Arvad, the home of the *"Arvadites,"* was the northernmost of the Phoenician colonies in Lebanon. It was built on a rocky island about 50 miles north of Byblos. Its modern counterpart is the village of Ruad. The *"Zemarites"* came from the port of Zemar on the Mediterranean coast of Syria between Tripoli and Arvad. It is mentioned frequently in extra-Biblical documents from the period. Hamath, was not on the coast. It was located about fifty miles inland on the Orontes River alongside one of the region's most important trade routes. Its location made the *"Hamathites"* very prosperous folk. The city of Hamath served as the northern border of the realm of Solomon (1 Kings 8:65) and later of the northern kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25-28).

*"Later the Canaanite clans scattered and the borders of Canaan reached..."* - The segment concludes with a geographical description of the boundaries of the land of Canaan. This unusual interest in the territorial dimensions of Canaan is clearly the result of God's impending bestowal of the land upon the descendants of Abraham. The theme of dispersal, raised here by the use of the verb *"scattered,"* sets the stage for the dispersal of the nations which will follow the confusion of languages after the fiasco of Babel's Tower in Chapter 11. The definition of the land of Canaan is unique in the Old Testament, although numerous other descriptions of the boundaries of the land are provided (i.e. Genesis 15:18; Numbers 34:2-12; Ezekiel 47:15-20; 48:1-28). Nahum Sarna suggests that the geographical description provided here corresponds to the boundaries of the Egyptian province of Caanan in the days of Ramses II, which would correlate chronologically to the time in which the Book of Genesis was written. The northern boundary is established by the coastal city of *"Sidon."* The Israelite conquest in the days of Joshua never actually reached this far, which in the glory days of Solomon the northern border of the kingdom had reached far beyond Sidon into northern Syria and Iraq. In the south, the land extended *"toward Gerar as far as Gaza."* *"Gerar"* was an important royal city in the western Negev Desert, located at a crucial oasis along the major caravan route about 15 miles northwest of Beer-sheba.



**“Gaza”** is located on the coastal highway that linked Egypt and North Africa with the cultures of the Fertile Crescent. Gaza eventually became one of the five cities of the Philistines who established themselves on the coastal plain. From Gerar and Gaza the boundaries move south-east toward the infamous **“cities of the plain”** (Genesis 14:2) at the southern end of the Dead Sea. These four cities became the foremost example of God’s judgment upon the wickedness and corruption of men. Moses warns the Children of Israel:

***“The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur - nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger.”*** (Deuteronomy 29:23)



***“Abraham Sees the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah” by J. James Tissot***

**“Sodom”** and **“Gomorrah”** are, of course, well-known because of their destruction by God in the days of Abraham and Lot (cf. Genesis 19). Aside from their connection with their more infamous counterparts, little is known about the location or identity of

**“Admah” and “Zeboiim.”** Hosea refers to these two ill-fated towns in his warning of impending judgment upon the nation of Israel: **“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim?”** (Hosea 11:8) The boundary list concludes with the observation - **“as far as Lasha.”** This town is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Rabbinic traditions identified it with Callirrhoe, a site of hot springs on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

**“These are the descendants of Ham...”** - The segment on Ham’s descendants concludes with the same formula which notes the completion of the the descendants of Japheth (vs.5) and Shem (vs.31).

### **Verses 21-31**

**Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber. The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech. Arphaxad was the father of Selah, and Selah the father of Eber. Two sons were born to Eber: one was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan. Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. The region were they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country. These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.**

**“Sons were also born to Shem...”** - The lineage of the Shemites receives particular attention for from this family line the chosen people will be descended through Eber, the ancestor of Abraham’s father Terah. Thus the Shemites appear last, in the position of greatest prominence, and Eber is mentioned in the introduction of the genealogy, although he is three generations removed from Shem. The unique importance of this genealogy is further indicated by the fact that it includes a total of twenty-six names, significantly more than either Japheth or Ham. The NIV follows the AV in translating the second phrase of Verse 21 - **“whose older brother was Japheth.”** Most Hebrew scholars today believe this to be a mis-translation. Nahum Sarna argues that **“the natural meaning required by the syntax”** of the Hebrew is **“Shem, the older brother of Japheth.”** (Sarna, p. 78) This understanding of the Hebrew text, listing Shem as the first-born Son of Noah, would also be consistent with the context of the phrase which



***“Assyrian Protective Spirit”***  
***Relief from the Imperial Palace at Nineveh***

10:3). The designation also occurs four times in the New Testament, and, of course, one of the New Testament’s Epistles is the Letter to the Hebrews. St. Paul refers to himself as ***“a Hebrew of Hebrews”*** as he emphasizes his credentials as a devout Jew in Philippians 3:5.

***“The sons of Shem: Elam...”*** - Five names are listed among the ***“sons of Shem.”***

is designed to emphasize the prominence and priority of Shem and his descendants.

***“Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.”*** - This unusual characterization of Shem as ***“the ancestor of all the sons of Eber,”*** serves to sharpen the focus of the text on the line through who the chosen people will come. ***“Eber”*** appears to be drawn from a root which means ***“across”*** or ***“beyond.”*** If this is the case, then the name means ***“one who is from beyond the other side.”*** (Matthews, p. 460) ***“Eber”*** becomes the eponym used to designate Abraham and his descendants as ***“Hebrews.”*** The first occurrence of the term is in Genesis 14:13 in the context of Abram’s participation in the war of the four kings: ***“One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew.”*** The designation is used frequently in the Old Testament, usually in situations where a foreigner is referring to the Israelites or they are referring to themselves to a foreigner. For instance, God instructed Moses to introduce His words to Pharaoh in this way: ***“This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews says...”*** (Exodus 7:16; 9:1;

**“Elam”** is the easternmost nation included in the listing. It is located in the mountainous regions east of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley is what is presently southwestern Iran. In ancient times, the capital city of Elam was **“Susa,”** mentioned in the Book of Esther in connection with the Persian Empire (cf. Esther 1:2-5). **“Kedorlaomer King of Elam”** is also listed among the four kings who defeated Sodom in the days of Abraham and Lord (cf. Genesis 14:1). **“Asshur”** was a city on the Upper Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia - modern Iraq. Asshur came to greatest prominence as one of the capitals of the Assyrian Empire, and the designation was

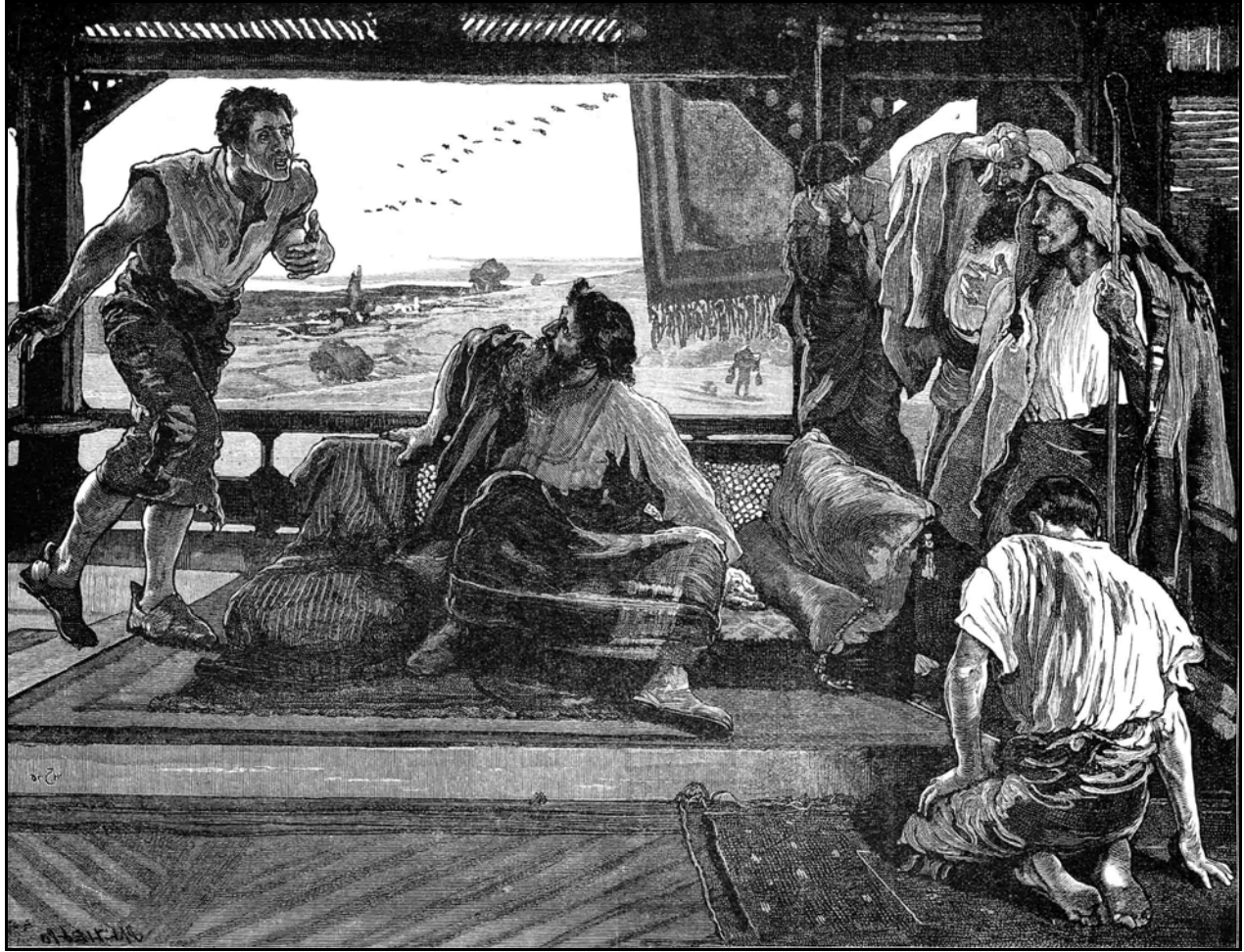


*“Ashurnasirpal, Emperor of Assyria, in his War Chariot”  
Relief from the Imperial Palace at Nineveh*

often used as an alternate name for Assyria. The identity of the next name among the sons of Shem, "**Arphaxad**," is uncertain. Hebrew tradition links Arphaxad to the Chaldeans, an archaic designation for the people of Babylon in southern Mesopotamia. In his "*Antiquities*," Josephus informs us: "*Arphaxad named the Arphaxadites, who are now called Chaldeans.*" (Josephus, p. 31) Arphaxad became the grandfather of Eber (cf. Genesis 11:10-12). "**Lud**" appears here for the second time in the Table of Nations (cf. Genesis 10:13). As previously noted (cf. p. 507), in this instance the reference is probably to the Lydians, a nation on the west coast of Asia Minor.

The list of Shem's sons concludes with "**Aram**" from whom the Semitic tribes of Syria are descended. The patriarchs of Israel maintained close relationship with their Syrian kinsmen. Abraham came to Canaan from a base in the Syrian town of Haran (Genesis 11:32). His son Isaac married an Aramean woman: "*Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddam Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.*" (Genesis 25:20) When Jacob fled the wrath of his brother Esau, he went the Aramean town of Paddam Aram to stay in the home of his uncle "*Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean.*" (Genesis 28:5). Jacob married two of Laban's Aramean daughters, Leah and Rachel. Later, Moses instructs the Israelites to recall their heritage with these words: "*Then you shall declare before the Lord, your God: 'My father was a wandering Aramean and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.'*" (Deuteronomy 26:5) The prophet Amos notes that the Arameans originated in the region of "**Kir**" in eastern Mesopotamia (Amos 9:7).

**"The sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech."** - The sons of Aram are listed first in the next generation because of their prominence in the history of the patriarchs. "**Uz**" becomes the founder of one of the basic Aramean tribal groupings. The name occurs again in Genesis 22:21 in reference to the first-born son of Abraham's brother Nahor. The land of Uz is mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament, located near Edom in the deserts of northwestern Arabia. It is the homeland of the patriarch Job: "*In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job.*" (Job 1:1) Jeremiah includes Uz among the nations which will be compelled to drink from the bitter cup of the Lord's wrath: "*All the kings of Uz, all the kings of Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod); Edom, Moab, and Ammon.*" (Jeremiah 25:20-21) In Lamentations 4:21-22, Jeremiah warns that God will deliver Zion while He punishes Edom and the land of Uz: "*Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who live in the land of Uz. But to you also the cup will be passed; you*



*“The Patriarch Job in the Land of Uz” - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bible Illustration*

*will be drunk and stripped naked. O daughter of Zion, your punishment will end; He will not prolong your exile. But, O Daughter of Edom, He will punish your sin and expose your wickedness.”*

*“Hul” and “Gether” are not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture or ancient history and must therefore remain unidentified. The NIV names the four son of Aram “Meshech.” The name in the Hebrew text (as noted in the NIV’s footnote) literally reads “Mash.” Hittite texts speak of a nation by that name in the mountains of central Asia Minor while the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic refers to the mountains of Lebanon as the “mashu.”*

*“Arphaxad was the father of Selah, and Selah the father of Eber.” - In tracing the line of Shem’s son Arphaxad, the text only mentions one descendant “Selah, the father*



*of Eber.*” This serves to focus the reader’s attention on the crucial lineage from which the chosen people will be descended. Nothing is known of the identity of *“Selah.”* The etymology of the name itself is disputed, some contending that it means *“weapon”* or *“missile,”* while others insist that it is derived from a term that means *“a tender branch”* or *“sprout.”* Later, the name recurs among the sons of Judah (cf. Genesis 38:5,11,14,26; 46:12; Numbers 26:20; 1 Chronicles 2:3; 4:21-23). The absence of further identification here signals the sole significance of this individual is the fact that he is the father of Eber.

*“Two sons were born to Eber: one was named Peleg...”* - Two sons of Eber are included in the genealogy. The first, *“Peleg,”* is linked to the *“time the earth was divided.”* The name *“Peleg”* sounds like the Hebrew word *“divided”* (*“niplega”*). This convenient homonymy becomes the context in which the text notes *“One was named Peleg because in his time the earth was divided.”* The division in question was obviously one with which the author assumed his readers would be familiar. Psalm 55:9 uses the same verb to describe the confusion of languages: *“Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city.”* This clear allusion to the confusion of tongues and the division of nations at the time of the tower of Babel has led most scholars to conclude that Babel is, in fact, the division which occurred in the lifetime of Peleg. Other than this incidental contextual reference, the genealogy provides no additional information about Peleg. That information will be forthcoming in the next chapter as the connection between Shem and Abraham is outlined in detail.

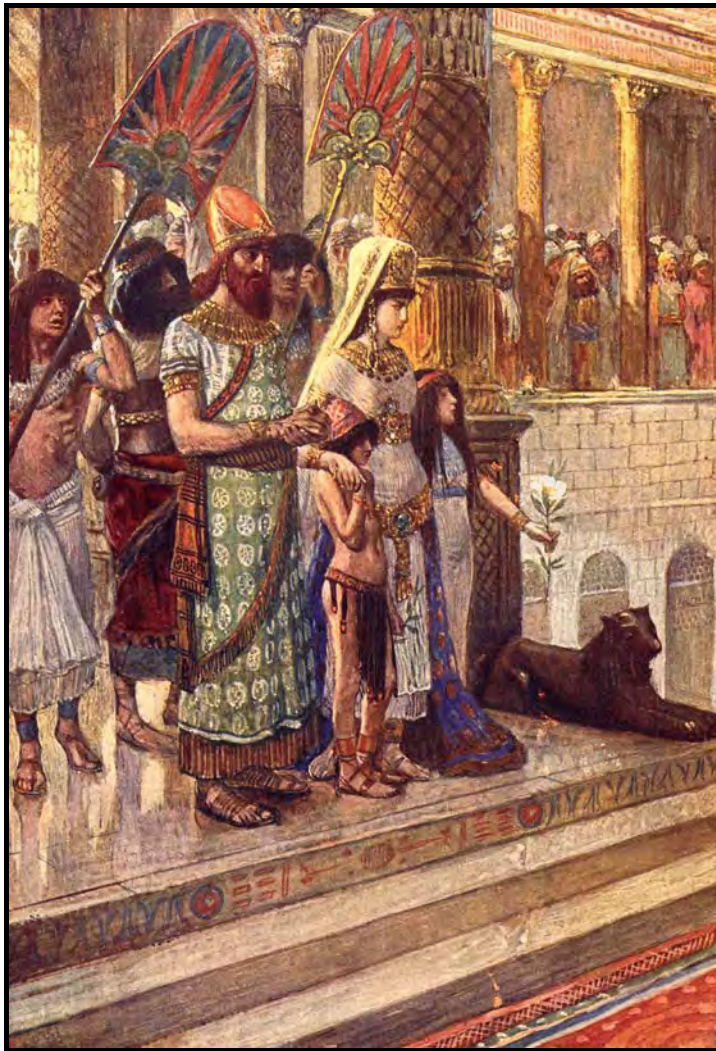
*“Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.”* - Eber’s second son is *“Joktan.”* The name is apparently related to the word for *“small”* or *“young,”* apparently designating Joktan as Peleg’s younger brother. An impressive total of thirteen sons of Joktan are listed in the text. This represents half of the total names included in the family of Shem. With the three notable exceptions of *“Sheba,”* *“Ophir,”* and *“Havilah”* the names included on the list are obscure and difficult to identify. *“Almodad”* means *“Beloved of God.”* Scholars suggest that this may have been an Arabian tribe in the region now known as Yemen. A similar identification has been proposed for both *“Sheleph”* and *“Hazarmaveth,”* linking them with nomadic tribes in the region around the current city of *“Hadoram”* in the deserts of south-western Arabia. The location of *“Jerah”* is similarly elusive. The term in Arabic means *“mouth.”* It has been suggested that

**“Jerah”** be connected to the area in modern Yemen known as **“Warah.”** **“Hadoram”** appears next on the list. The name literally means **“Baal is Exalted.”** Phonetic similarity points to the contemporary village of **“Dauraum”** in central Yemen. An often disputed Arab tradition associates **“Uzal”** with the city of **“San’a,”** the capital of the modern nation of Yemen. **“Diklah”** is probably derived from **“diqla,”** the Hebrew word for **“palm tree.”** The reference is most likely to a presently unidentified oasis in the deserts of southern Arabia where palm trees flourished. Variations of the name **“Obal”** are common in the region which makes the specific location of this group problematic. **“Abimael”** means **“My Father is Truly God.”** Its location is unknown. In contrast, the next three names are well known, mentioned frequently in the Old Testament .



*“The Queen of Sheba Visits the Court of Solomon” by J. James Tissot*

The most familiar reference to the kingdom of **“Sheba”** in the Old Testament comes from the relationship between the Queen of Sheba and Israel’s great King Solomon. 1 Kings reports the fabulous gifts that this exotic lady presented to the King: **“And she gave the king 120 talents (about 4 ½ tons!) of gold, large quantities of spices and**



*“Solomon and the Queen of Sheba”  
by J. James Tissot*

*precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.”* (1 Kings 10:10; cf. also 2 Chronicles 9:1) Like the other nations among the descendants of Joktan, Sheba was located on the Arabian peninsula. The land of *“Ophir”* was also well known to the Israelites. Often linked to its neighbor, the land of *“Havilah,”* both kingdoms were renown among the nations of the ancient world for their fabulous wealth. They were said to be rich in gold and precious jewels. *“Havilah”* is mentioned in Genesis 2 in the description of the abundance of the Garden of Eden: *“The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.”* (Genesis 2:11-12) When Solomon sought the finest materials in the world for the adornment of his temple, he sent his fleet of ships to Ophir: *“They sailed to Ophir and*

*brought back 420 talents (16 tons!) of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon...Hiram’s ships brought gold from Ophir and from there they brought great cargoes of almugwood and precious stones.”* (1 Kings 9:28, 10:11) These wealthy trading kingdoms were, no doubt, located on the eastern shores of the Red Sea. The final name on the list *“Jobab”* remains unidentifiable.

*“The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.”* - Dr. Matthews correctly notes: *“The identity of Mesha and Sephar remains an enigma.”* (Matthews, p. 465) The qualifying phrase *“in the eastern hill country”* suggests that these two points defined the borders of Arabia within which the

descendants of Joktan had settled. ***“These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.”*** - The family history of the sons Shem concludes with the same formula which had marked the end of each of Noah’s other two sons. The reference to various ***“languages”*** anticipates the confusion of tongues which will occur in the next chapter after the debacle at the Tower of Babel.

## ***Verse 32***

***These are the clans of Noah’s sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the Flood.***

***“These are the clans of Noah’s sons...”*** - The Table of Nations comes to an end with this brief summary statement. Victor Hamilton emphasizes the unique role of this segment of the Old Testament in the literature of the ancient Near East:

*“The Table of Nations is brought to an end with this verse, which summarizes the entire list of entries. Geographically the list had gone as far east as Persia (Elam), as far south as Ethiopia (Cush) and the Arabian Peninsula, as far north as Anatolia (Gomer, Madai), and as far west as Crete (Kittim, Caphtorim) and Libya. It is not without interest that such a table of nations is unique to OT literature. Neither the hieroglyphic nor the cuneiform worlds produced a parallel document.”*  
(Hamilton, p. 346)

The theological intent of the text is clear: to affirm the common origin of all of humanity in the creative act of God. That message is conveyed by the very structure of the Table of Nations itself. There is a total of seventy nations included in the listing: 14 Japhethites, 30 Hamites, and 26 Shemites. Nahum Sarna notes:

*“The figure seventy, even if not explicitly given, can hardly be fortuitous...In the Biblical world, the number seventy is ‘typological,’ that is, it is used for rhetorical effect to evoke the idea of totality, of comprehensiveness on a large scale, as opposed to the use of seven on the smaller scale...In light of this convention, one may safely assume that the making of the offspring of Noah’s sons total seventy is a literary device to convey the notion of the totality of the human race.”* (Sarna, p. 69)

Human beings, despite all their differences, are ultimately the same in that we are all descended from one common source. The inherent value and dignity of human life, by virtue of its original creation in the image of God, therefore, is universal. It applies equally to people of every race, nation, and language. St Paul declared this truth to the Greeks in Athens when he said:

***“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth...From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determines the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”*** (Acts 17:24,26)

The prominence of the Shemites in the narrative further serves as a transition to the divine selection of Abraham and his descendants as the custodians of God’s promise of salvation and the nation from whom the Messiah would one day be born. The sinfulness of mankind which had led to the horror of the Flood will be forcefully reasserted by the construction of the Tower of Babel, but according to His promise to Noah, God will not destroy the earth again by means of a Flood. Instead in His grace and mercy He will send a Savior who will win for fallen men the salvation which they could never have won for themselves. Once again, the text anticipates the grim events to come as it alludes to the fact that ***“the nations spread out over the earth after the Flood.”***



***“Nimrod, the Mighty Hunter” by J.N. Paton***

# Genesis Chapter 11

## The Tower of Babel

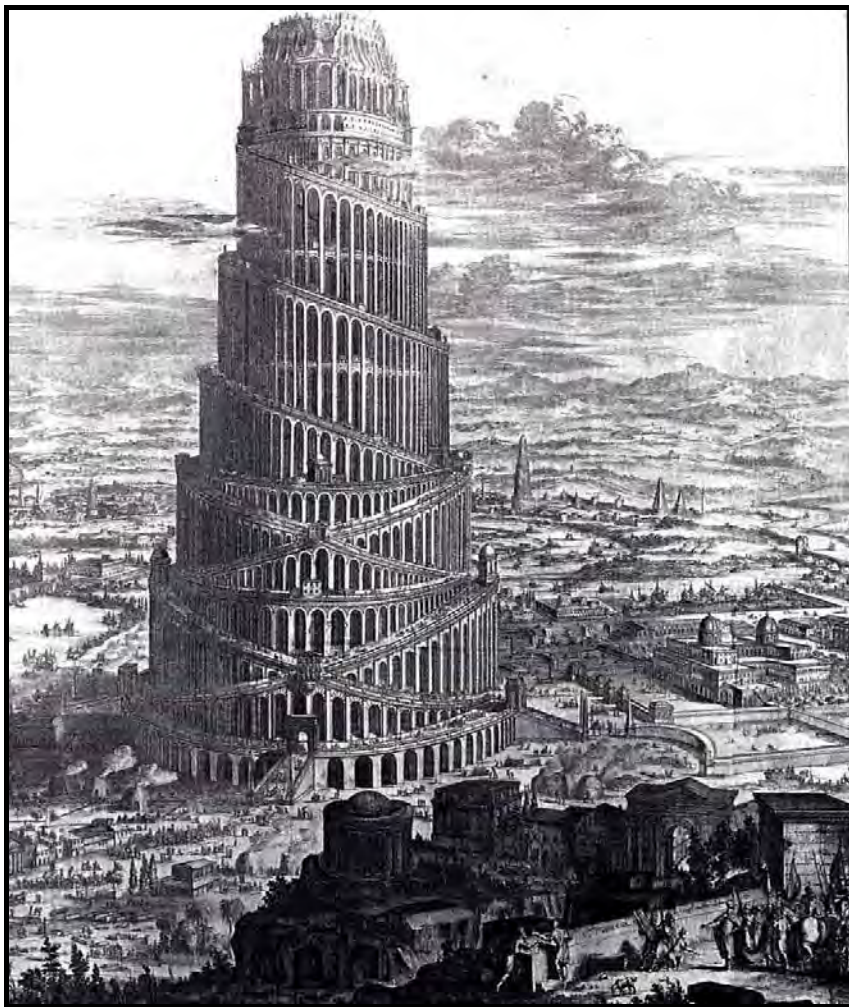


*“The Tower of Babel” by Rudolf Schüfer*

### *Verses 1-4*

*Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone and tar instead of mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”*

***“Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.”*** - The sad story of the Tower of Babel is now related to explain the dispersal of nations and multiplicity of languages that has already been described in the preceding chapter. Chronologically these events preceded much of the material presented in the Table of Nations. St. Augustine notes: *“The narrative, without mentioning it, goes back to tell how it came about that the one language common to all men was broken up into many tongues.”* (Louth, p. 165) The genealogy of Shem informs us that ***“the earth was divided”*** in the days of Peleg, the son of Eber (Genesis 10:25). Peleg was born 100 years after the end of the Flood. That means that the confusion of tongues and the subsequent scattering of humanity occurred a century after Noah and his family had come forth from the ark. Leupold contends that, based on the assumption that families had an average of eight children, the world’s population could already have expanded to nearly 30,000 people in that time frame.



***“The Tower of Babel” by C. Decker - 1670***

The unity of post-Flood humanity is emphasized by the three phrases ***“whole world,” “one language,”*** and ***“common speech.”*** In the first instance, the Hebrew text literally says *“all the earth.”* This is comprehensive terminology, clearly designed to include to every human being on the face of the planet (cf. Genesis 1:29; 19:31; Exodus 19:5; Numbers 14:21). Noted Hebrew scholar Nahum Sarna is correct in his assertion: *“The reiterated emphasis on the involvement of the totality of humankind in the offense is crucial to the understanding of the episode as the climactic event in the universal history of the Book of Genesis.”* (Sarna, p. 81)

The text uses both *“language”* (Hebrew *“saphah”* - literally the shape or configuration of the lips) and *“speech”* (Hebrew *“debharim”* - words, vocabulary) to stress the importance of a common language as an indicator of the unity of mankind. *“In the early days after the Flood such a complete speech unity was, indeed, an indication of a deeper spiritual and cultural unity.”* (Leupold, p. 383) The identity of that one common language is unspecified and cannot be determined at this point in time.

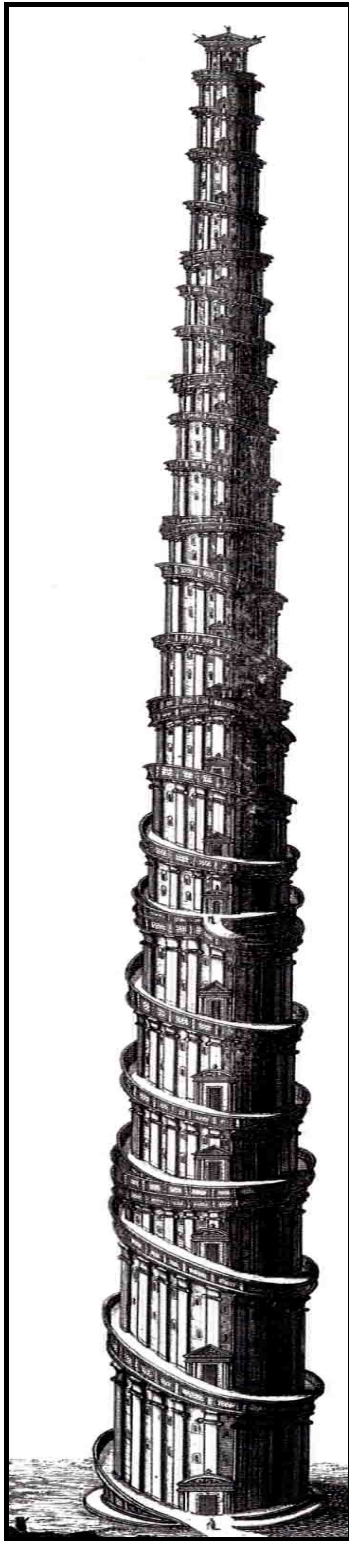
*“As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.”* - The ark had grounded *“on the mountains of Ararat,”* (Genesis 8:4), that is, in the highlands of Armenia south of the Black Sea in the eastern regions of the modern nation of Turkey.

Movement from this area to the plains of *“Shinar”* would, in fact, have been in a south-easterly direction. It is also significant to note that in the book of Genesis movement *“eastward”* becomes a common metaphor for separation and division. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, the cherubim with the fiery sword guarded the eastern gate to the Garden (Genesis 3:24). When Cain was cursed because of the murder of his brother he migrated toward the land of Nod, *“east of Eden.”* (Genesis 4:12-16) When Lot separated from Abraham, he journeyed eastward toward Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:10-12). Abraham’s sons by Keturah are dispersed to the east to separate them from Isaac and his family (Genesis 25:6) and when Jacob flees the wrath of Esau he goes into exile among the eastern peoples of Aram (Genesis 29:1). So also here, in the story of the Tower of Babel, the movement to the east signals the



*“Building the Tower of Babel”  
from the Grimani Breviary - 15<sup>th</sup> Century*





*“The Tower of Babel”  
by Athanasius Kirchner*

impending separation and division of humanity.

The plains of **“Shinar”** have appeared previously in the narrative of Genesis, in conjunction with the Kingdom of ***Erech, Akkad and Calneh in Shinar.***” (Genesis 10:10; cf. Notes, p. 502) This text becomes the basis for the traditional link between the infamous Nimrod and the construction of the Tower of Babel. Because of its connection with Nimrod, Shinar becomes an ominous and an evil place, thus setting the stage for the tragic events which will ensue. **“Shinar”** is the southern portion of Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It was first called **“Sumer,”** then the dual states of **“Sumer and Akkad,”** and finally Babylonia, named for the mighty city which was the capital of this nation. This area today comprises the southern portion of the country of Iraq, between the city of Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. Mesopotamia was the cradle of ancient Near Eastern civilization because of its abundant water supply and extraordinarily fertile soil.

**“And settled there.”** - The wandering of humanity ends upon the luxuriant plain of Shinar. The text uses the Hebrew verb **“yasab”** to describe the establishment of a permanent residence in this place in contrast to the migratory wandering which had preceded and the scattering which will follow. The same verb will recur later in the story of Abraham’s departure from his family home in the Babylonian city of Ur to **“settle”** in the town of Haran from which he will finally journey to the land of God’s promise (Genesis 12:1-3). **“This parallel is further evidence that the two accounts are integrally linked and shows that the calling of Abraham must be read against the backdrop of the Babel event.”** (Matthews, p. 479)

**“They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly...”** - A **“speech of intention”**



*“Nimrod of Babylon - the Mighty Hunter” by Briton Rivere*

(Hamilton, p. 352) introduces the action which is to follow. These comments serve to introduce both the deeds of men and God, providing, as it were, a window into the speaker’s mind, enabling us to understand motive and purpose.

Leupold aptly describes these remarks as *“The first counsels that were held as the titanic project got underway.”* (Leupold, p. 385) Each sentence in the comment begins with the dramatic imperative, *“Come!”* The language in the original Hebrew is vivid and colorful, full of wordplay, alliteration, and assonance. Literally the opening suggestion reads - *“Let us brick bricks and bake them baking.”*

The reference to kiln baked bricks and bitumen mortar clearly reveals a familiarity with the building techniques of ancient Mesopotamia and connects the tower to be built with the great city of Babylon. The use of glazed brick was distinctly different than the practice in Palestine, where the abundance of stone rock construction typical in anything beyond the mud brick hovels of the poor. Thus Moses adds the explanatory comment: *“They used brick instead of stone and tar instead of mortar.”* The rarity of stone in lower Mesopotamia made the develop of alternate technologies

a necessity. Bricks that had been fired in a kiln were more solid and durable than their sun dried counterparts and their invention led to a flowering of monumental construction in Babylon and the other cities of the region during the fourth millennium B.C. The use of bitumen, or tar, as the mortar with the glazed bricks further added to the strength and impermeability of the brick. Babylon was renown for the



*“Glazed Brick Dragon Relief from the Ishtar Gate of Ancient Babylon”*

development of this technology throughout the ancient world and the individual glazed bricks were often inscribed with the name of the royal benefactor who had subsidized the project. The Sumerian creation epic, *“Enuma Elish,”* reports that before the gods began the construction of the city of Babylon, they spent an entire year molding and baking the necessary bricks.

*“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens...’* - The explanatory introduction continues, accented with a second exclamation, *“Come, let us...”*. The purpose for the preparation of the glazed bricks

is to ***“build ourselves a city with a tower that reaches the heavens”***; and the purpose of the city with its magnificent tower is ***“so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”*** Luther does not exaggerate when he describes these goals as *“extremely arrogant words of Satan and his children against God.”* (LW, AE, 2, p. 220) The Lord had blessed Noah and his family and instructed them to: ***“Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”*** (Genesis 9:1). Now sinful mankind, in their proud defiance of the purpose of God, has decided that they does not wish to ***“be scattered over the face of the whole earth”*** as the Creator had intended. Instead, these men wish to ***“make a name”*** for themselves by building a massive tower that will stand forever as a monument to their own ingenuity and power. The concept of established an indelible reputation through the construction of huge monuments was common in the ancient Near East. This was also the goal of another proud Babylonian monarch, King Nebuchadnezzar, who commemorated his restoration of the city’s great tower with this inscription: *“The fortifications of Esagila and Babylon I strengthened, and made an everlasting name for my reign.”* (Sarna, p. 83) Prideful autonomy is the theme that runs throughout these comments. The builders of Babylon and its tower are determined to liberate themselves from any dependance upon God and every obligation to serve and obey Him. By demonstrating their own strength and unity of purpose through the building of a city and a tower, they are resolved to pursue their own desires in a way that will make them famous forever.



***“The Tower of Babel” by Joachim Blauel - 1670***



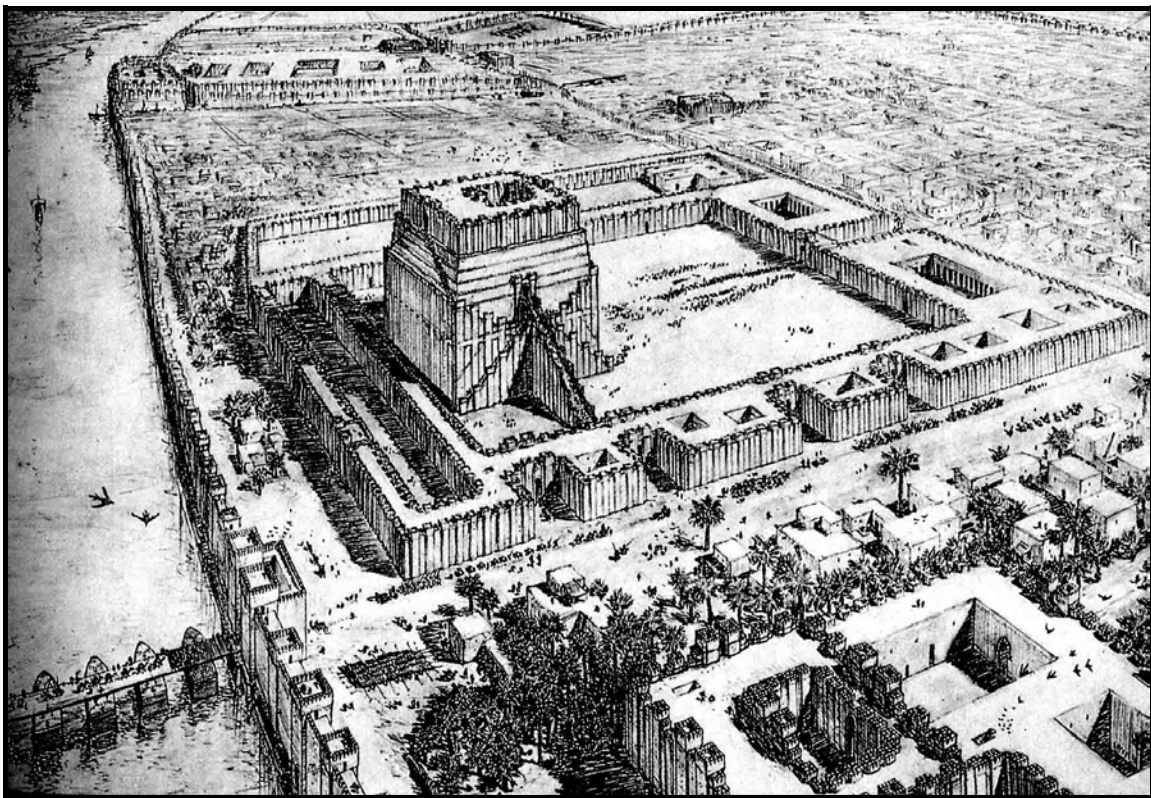
*“The Tower of Babel” by Nik Wheeler*

They would build an impregnable fortress where they would be free to live as they chose to live with no fear of outside interference or divine judgment.

The erection of **“a tower that reaches the heavens”** is the focal point of the narrative. *“The tower was to provide the rallying point and to be at the same time the token of their oneness of purpose. So it, of necessity, becomes the symbol of defiance to God.”* (Leupold, p. 387) The very language that is chosen to describe this titanic tower breathes the spirit of rebellion and defiance against God which drives its builders. With what they build for themselves, they will storm the very ramparts of heaven, the dwelling place of God. This language will become characteristic in the Old Testament to describe buildings of impressive and monumental proportions. When the spies return from their survey of the land, they report that the cities of the Canaanites are **“great and fortified up to heaven.”** (Deuteronomy 1:28; cf. 9:1) In what may well be an allusion to Genesis 11, the prophet Jeremiah warns that no matter how mighty the great city of Babylon and her fortifications are, she shall not escape the righteous judgment of God: **“Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and fortify her strong height, yet destroyers will come upon her from Me, says the Lord.”** (Jeremiah 51:53)

The construction of lofty multi-storied temple-towers was a standard feature of the cities of ancient Mesopotamia. These great towers were called “ziggurats,” based on the Akkadian verb “zaqaru,” which means “to build high.” The concept of the towers seems to have been that these man-made mountains would enable men to rise to the heavenly dwelling place of the gods and enter into direct communication with them. In his classic history, *The Babylonians*, H.W.F. Saggs notes:

*“The ziggurat was thus a kind of ladder set up from heaven to earth. This idea links up with the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:3-5, which was certainly related to a Mesopotamian ziggurat, and also with the ladder mentioned in Jacob’s dream in Genesis 27:12 of which we are told that it was ‘set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.’”*  
(Saggs, p. 281)



*“E-temen-an-ki” the Great Ziggurat of Babylon by Georg Gerstner*

Within the temples at the top of these towers lived sacred high priestesses who lived lives of carefully monitored chastity. They were called the “entu” which literally

means “*the wife of the god,*” and their participation in periodic sacred marriage ceremonies was designed to ensure the fertility of the kingdom. The Greek historian Herodotus disdainfully reported the superstitions of the Chaldeans with the careful disclaimer that he himself did not believe such foolishness. He tells us that at the top of the ziggurat in Babylon:

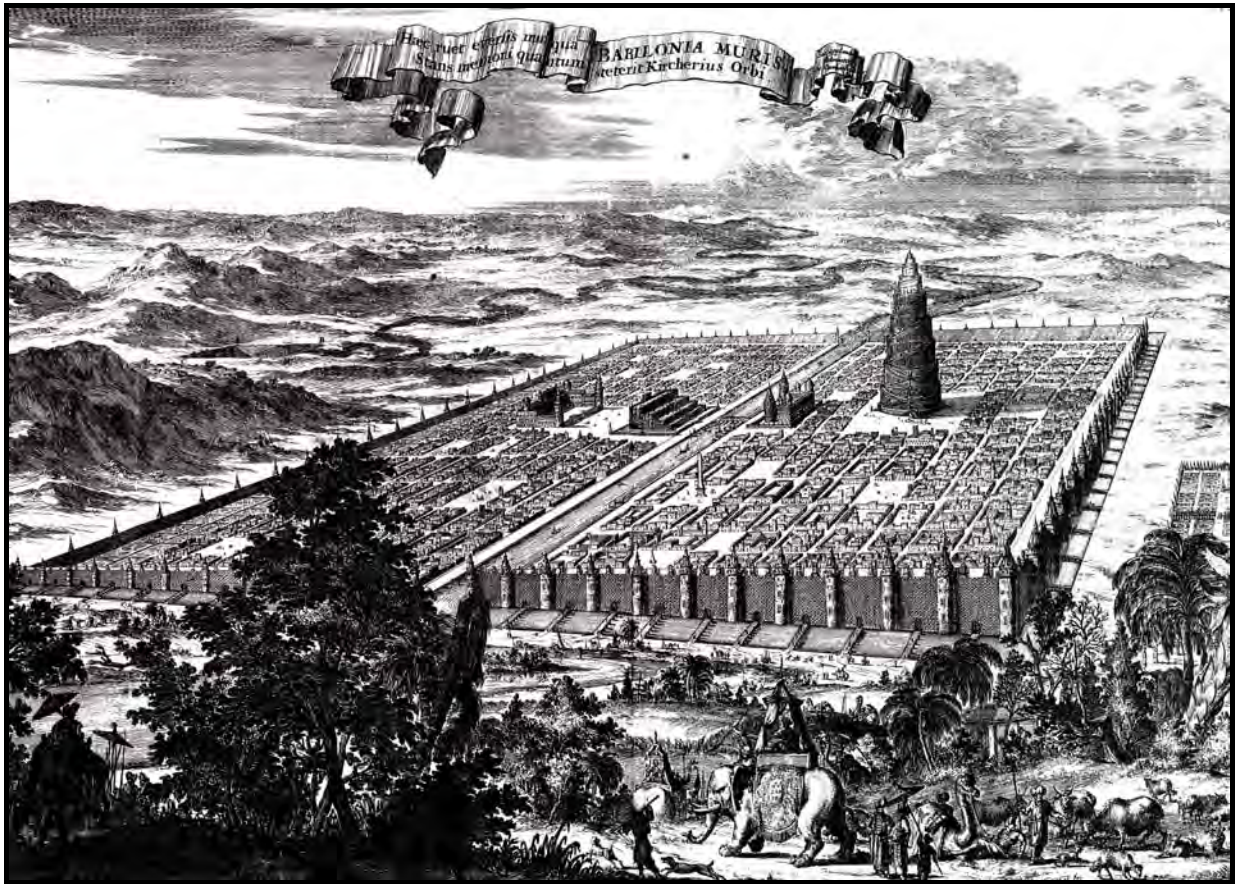
*“stands a great temple with a sumptuously equipped couch in it...No one spends the night there except one Assyrian woman, chosen by the god himself; or so say the Chaldeans who are the priests of Bel. These Chaldeans say - not that I believe them - that the god himself comes into the temple and takes his rest upon the couch.”* (Saggs, p. 278)

The temple tower of Nippur was called “*The House of the Mountain,*” while the ziggurat of Asshur was designated “*The House of the Mountain of the Universe.*” In the city of Larsa, the ziggurat was “*The House of the Link Between Heaven and Earth.*” The most magnificent and renowned of all the great ziggurats was, of course, the massive temple of Marduk in Babylon itself. It was known as “*E-temen-an-ki,*” that is, “*The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth.*” Studies of its ruins by German archaeologist Robert Koldewey early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have determined that the base of this great tower was 300 feet square and that it soared to the height of 300 feet, dominating the skyline of the great city

## ***Verses 5-9***

***But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” So the Lord scattered them from there over the whole earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel - because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there, the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.***

***“But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower...”*** - God’s response to man’s defiant declaration of self-sufficiency is quickly forthcoming. The tragic irony of the text’s language is unmistakable. Sinful men had presumed to build a tower that would reach to heaven and yet the Lord must “*come down*” to inspect that tower. Evidently man had not quite achieved the goal which he had set for himself. The necessity of



*“Babylon and Its Tower” - 17<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving by C. Decker*

God’s coming down reveals this pathetic escapade for what it was - *“a tiny tower, conceived by a puny plan and attempted by a pint sized people.”* (Matthews, p. 483). The anthropomorphic language of the text (speaking of God as though He were a man), *“But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower...”*, does not describe a literal physical descent to the site by God. God’s sovereign omnipresence and omniscience eliminate the necessity of actual movement from one place to another and the conducting of investigations. Leupold explains the sense of the language:

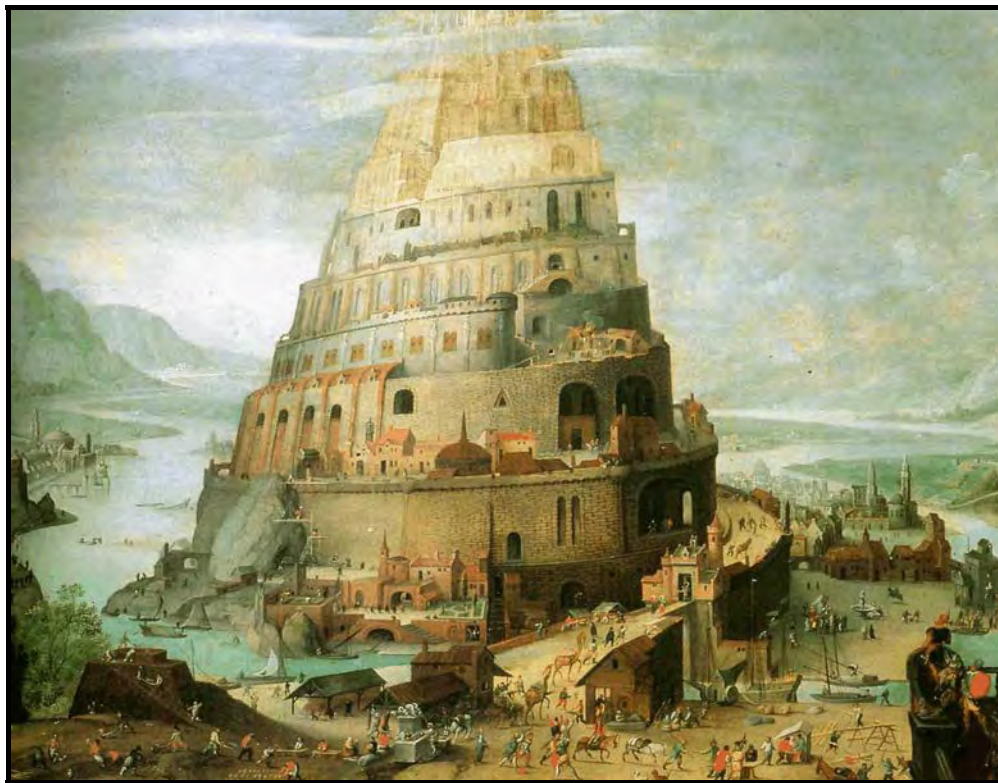
*“It is a vivid way of stating that God interposed. Where He had till now, as so often in the affairs of the children of men, simply allowed things to take their course, now He manifestly intervenes and takes the situation in hand. His judicial control and regulation is His coming down.”*  
(Leupold, p. 388)

The same anthropomorphic language will recur in Genesis 18:21 to describe God’s judgment intervention upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.



***“The Lord said, ‘If as one people, speaking the same language, they have begun to do this...”*** - Once again, the text of Genesis utilizes the literary technique of *“divine deliberation”* to allow the reader to *“read God’s mind”* and thereby to understand the rationale for and the motive of His subsequent actions.

The substance of God’s concern is that there will be no limit to the arrogance and pride of sinful humanity united by one common language - ***“If, as one people, speaking the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.”*** God recognizes that this ridiculously futile attempt to achieve independent access to heaven through the construction of a great tower is only the beginning. Relentlessly driven by the obsession with self which is the essence of sin, fallen humanity would separate itself ever further from God and His love in the mindless pursuit of power and pleasure. The inevitable result of this would not be self-realization or satisfaction but self-destruction. The creature can only find genuine fulfillment and satisfaction in harmony with the Creator from whom he has come. Thus God’s concern in this instance is not the protection of His own divine power or prerogative, but man’s well-being and happiness. The loving God must act to protect man from the consequences of his own sinfulness. St. Jerome observes:



***“The Tower of Babel” - 16<sup>th</sup> Century Flemish Painting***

*“Indeed, when the tower was being built up against God, those who were building it were disbanded for their own welfare. The conspiracy was evil. The dispersion was of true benefit even to those who were dispersed.”* (Louth, 169) It is significant to note that the text uses the divine Name “Yahweh” throughout this segment which designates God as the loving God of the covenant.

*“Moses regards the whole transaction rather as a demonstration of the mercy of God - God defeated man’s purpose so as to prevent man from injuring himself further - as the use of the divine name Jahweh three times in these two verses, suggests.”* (Leupold, p. 391)

The same pattern can be discerned in the beginning when God acted to bar the way back to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life: **“And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever.’”** (Genesis 3:22) Kenneth Matthews is exactly correct in his observation:

*“In both instances it can hardly be that the heavens trembled because the ‘advancement’ of man in any way threatened celestial rule. But, on the contrary, God was troubled over the injurious consequences that would fall upon the human family if left unchecked.”* (Matthews, p. 484)

To speak here of “*divine anxiety*” as do some liberal commentators is nothing less than blasphemous nonsense which must be absolutely rejected by anyone who believes in God and accepts the Bible as His inspired Word.

Mankind’s rebellion is facilitated by the fact that they are **“one people, speaking the same language.”** Accordingly, God will remove the temptation by confusing humanity’s languages and causing their dispersion across the globe into separate nations.

**“Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”** - God’s commentary - introduced with the dramatic exclamation **“Come, let us...”** - becomes, in effect, a sad parody of the boastful comments of humanity, deliberately structured and worded in much the same way. One commentator describes these words as *“God’s ultimate mimicry of the towerites.”* (Matthews, p. 484) The



*"The Tower of Babel" by Gustav Dore'*

means which God uses to frustrate their effort is the confusion of their language. The Hebrew verb **“confuse”** (“*nabela*”) uses the same three consonants (“*n-b-l*”) in reverse order that were used in the verb **“make bricks”** (“*nilbena*” - “*l-b-n*”) which occurred earlier in mankind’s comment in Verse 3. So also in this way God’s action in undoing that which man had presumptuously attempted to do is signaled. St. Augustine notes that the use of the plural pronoun **“us”** in this divine deliberation is an allusion to the inner counsels of the three members of the Trinity - *“It is conceivable that here there may have been an allusion to the Trinity, if we suppose that the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, ‘Come, let us descend and confound their tongue.’ The supposition is sound.”* (Louth, p. 168)

**“So the Lord scattered them from there over the whole earth....”** - The purpose of God is accomplished without obstacle or opposition, thus revealing the pathetic futility of man’s rebellion. Men disperse over the entire face of the earth, banding together in small groups based upon their suddenly limited ability to communicate with one another. No doubt the global dispersion occurred only gradually over a great many years. This is further suggested by the summary statement in Verse 9 - **“From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.”** The movement of men and nations at this point in time was probably facilitated by the ongoing instability of the earth’s crust and fluctuations in sea levels which persisted for some time after the global catastrophe of the Flood. Islands and continents now completely separated from one another by ocean barrier may well have been connected by land bridges for many years after the Flood.

As previously noted, the identity of the original universal language is unidentified and unidentifiable. So also, the number of languages into which mankind is now separated is unspecified. Given the pernicious persistence of racism in human history, it is most important to recognize that the origin of the nations took place on the basis of language, not ethnic descent. Racial identity is nothing more than the incidental result of genetic reinforcement based on inbreeding within an isolated population over a protracted period of time.

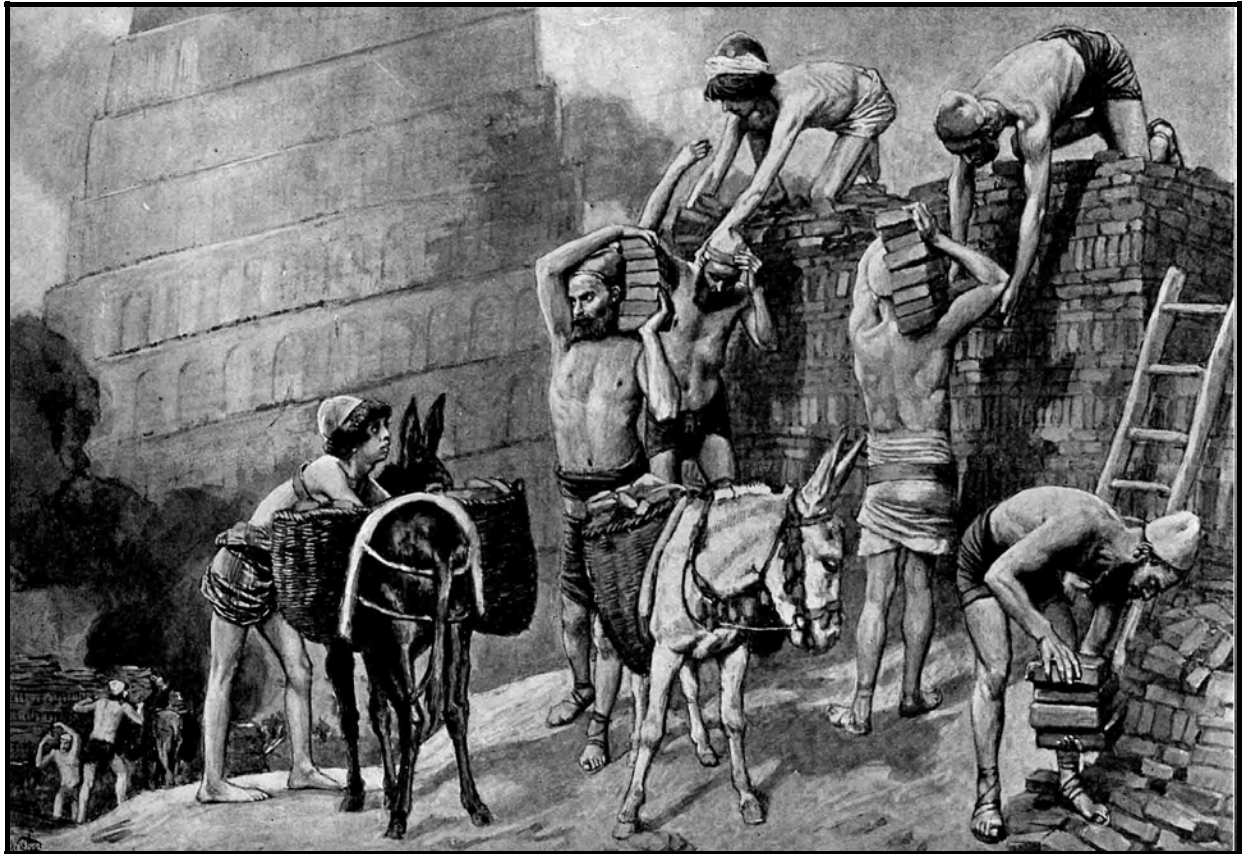
While humanity’s dispersal was most probably gradual, its impact upon the construction of the city and the tower is immediate - **“and they stopped building the city.”** *“The building enterprise spontaneously dissipated as the result of the builders’ dispersal.”* (Matthews, p. 485)

***“That is why it was called Babel - because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world.”*** - An arrogant desire to ***“make a name for ourselves”*** (vs. 4) had been a significant part of the builders’ original motive. Genesis informs us that this ambition was, in fact, realized, although not quite in the way in which the builders of Babel had originally envisioned: ***“That is why it was called Babel - because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world.”*** The English translations tend to obscure the word-play of the original Hebrew text based on the verb ***“balel”*** (***“confuse”***). To carry the artful satire into the English text we might render the phrase: ***“That is why it was called Babel because there the Lord turned the language of the whole world into a babble.”*** The grandiose names which the cities of Mesopotamia typically bestowed upon their great ziggurat towers have already been noted (cf. p. 534). Thus the massive tower of Babylon was designated ***“The House***



***“The Lord Scattered Them From There” by Wilhelm von Kaulbach***

*of the Foundation of Earth and Heaven.” Scripture’s assessment is a great deal more realistic. The tower of man’s defiant pride was not the gateway to heaven but “a site of meaningless gibberish, the center from which human divisiveness radiated, and the cause of disastrous alienation from God.” (Sarna, p. 84)*



*“Building the Tower of Babel” by J. James Tissot*

### ***Verses 10-26***

*This is the account of Shem. Two years after the Flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters. When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Selah, and after he became the father of Selah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Selah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. And after he became the father of Eber, Selah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters. When*

*Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters. When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters. When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters. When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters. After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.*

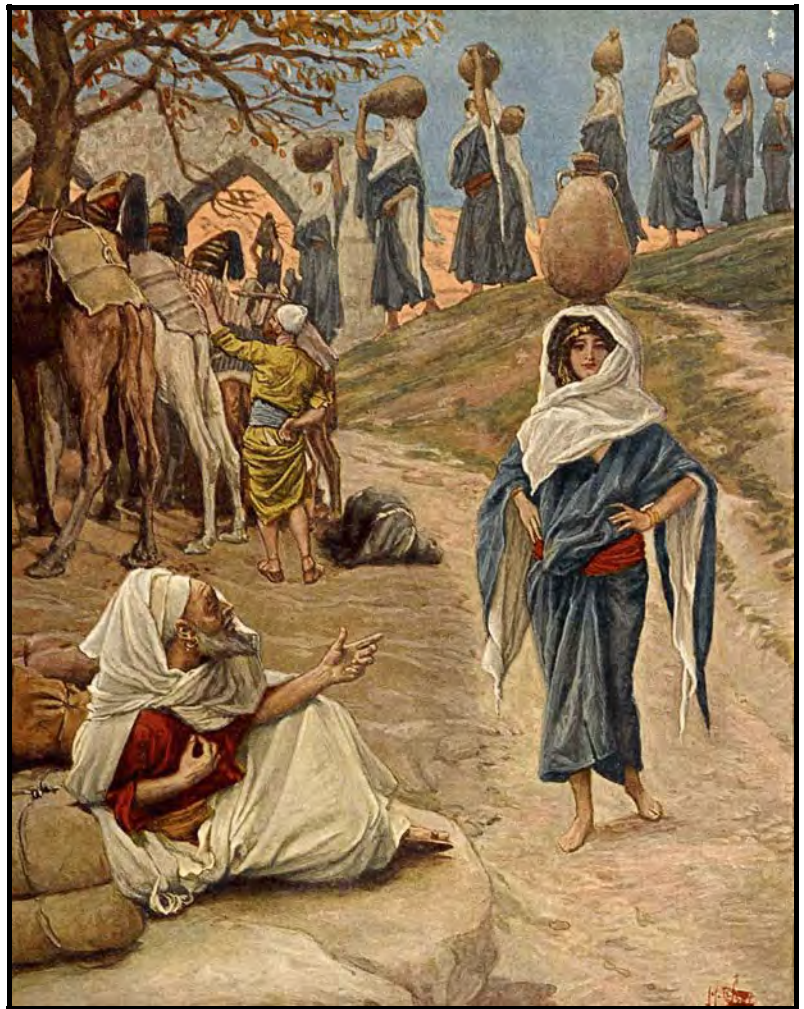


*“The Confusion of Tongues at Babel” by Hippolyte Flandrin*

*“This is the account of Shem.”* - The sad story of the Tower of Babel demonstrated the futility of man’s feeble attempts to assert himself and achieve power and glory. But even in that inglorious failure the will of God was served as the subsequent dispersal of the nations sets the stage for the election of the chosen people, the seed of Abraham, through whom God’s plan for the salvation of all mankind will be achieved. With the conclusion of the tale of the fiasco at Babel, the focus returns to

the genealogy of Shem which will serve as the transition to the story of the patriarchs in subsequent chapters. The genealogy is introduced with the familiar “*elleh toledoth*” formula (literally - *these are the generations of*) which provides the structure for the entire book of Genesis. The same phrase had been utilized earlier to highlight the patriarchs Adam and Noah (cf. Genesis 5:1; 6:9; 10:1).

**“Two years after the Flood, when Shem was 100 years old...”** - The genealogy follows the customary structure of identifying the father, providing his age at the birth of his first-born son, and then specifying the number of years which he lived after the birth of his son. However this genealogy differs from its predecessors in that it does not list the total life-span of each individual nor does it announce his death. The dramatic diminution of human life-spans is immediately evident, and becomes more pronounced with the advent of each new generation. The remnants of the perfect environment which God had originally created were swept away by the Flood and the drastically transformed physical environment is much less hospitable to human life. The genealogy begins with a repetition of the earlier Shemite history from Genesis 10:21-25 which had traced the line from Shem to Peleg. In this instance, however, the genealogy is linear, that is, it lists only one son in each generation until it comes to Terah, the father of Abraham, where all three sons are listed. A more detailed account of the family history of Terah will follow. It is significant to note that Abraham is the tenth generation from Shem and the twentieth generation from Adam,



**“Eleazar Meet Rebecca at the Well of Nahor”  
by J. James Tissot**



thus placing Shem and the Flood at the midpoint of human history in this outline. The pivotal importance of Abraham is further indicated by the fact that he is the seventh generation from Eber, the celebrated ancestor of the Hebrews (cf. Genesis 10:21).

*“When Peleg had lived thirty years, he became the father of Reu.”* - It is at this point that the genealogy of Chapter 11 digresses from its predecessor in Chapter 10 to follow the line of *“Reu.”* This is the only occurrence of Reu in the Old Testament. It is also mentioned in the genealogy of Christ in Luke 3:35. It is probably an abbreviated form of the name *“Reuel,”* a Hebrew name which means *“Friend of God.”* Reu is the father of *“Serug.”* *“Serug”* does not occur elsewhere in Scripture, with the exception of the genealogy of Christ (Luke 3:35). It is related to the Assyrian city *“Sarugi”* in upper Mesopotamia just north of Haran. Serug is the father of *“Nahor.”* Thus, *“Nahor”* is the grandfather of Abraham, whose brother bore the same name (Genesis 11:27). This name is also reflected in an ancient city, *“Nahor,”* in northwestern Mesopotamia. Rebecca, the wife of Isaac and the mother of Jacob and Esau, was from the city of Nahor (cf. Genesis 22:23). The final name on the list is that of *“Terah,”* Abraham’s father. Like the other names in this family history, Terah seems to be derived from the name of a village, *“Tilsa Turahi,”* in upper Mesopotamia near Haran. Unlike the other men cited in the genealogy to whom sons are born around age 30, Terah does not become a father until he is 70 years old. Given the subsequent difficulties of Abraham and Sarah in conceiving a child, this is



*“God’s Call of Abraham” by Rudolf Schäfer*

an ominous note. Joshua reminds the Israelites that Abraham's father was a worshiper of idols: ***“Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the river and worshiped other gods.”*** (Joshua 24:2) Hebrew tradition goes a step farther, indicating that Terah was, in fact, a major manufacturer of idols in the ancient city of Ur. The apocryphal book of *“Jubilees,”* written during the inter-testamental period, reports that Abram scorned his father's idols as lifeless *“works of men's hands”* which had to be helplessly carried around on men's shoulders. He pleaded with Terah to turn away from idols and worship the true God:

*“What help or advantage do we have from these idols before you worship and bow down? Because there is not any spirit in them for they are mute, and they are misleading of the heart. Do not worship them. Worship the God of heaven, who sends down rain and dew upon the earth, and created everything by His Word and all life is in His presence.”* (Jubilees 12:2-4)

## ***Verses 27-32***

***This is the account of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. Now Sarai was barren; she had no children. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran and his daughter in law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. Terah lived 205 years and he died in Haran.***

***“This is the account of Terah.”*** - This segment of the Book of Genesis concludes with a more detailed account of the family history of Terah, introduced by the customary phrase ***“This is the account of..”*** (Hebrew - *“elleth toledoth”*). The account provides the crucial background information for the story of Abraham and his descendants which will follow. It is, as Nahum Sarna suggests, *“the culmination of a historic process of continuous divine selection that began with Adam's sons.”* (Sarna, p. 86)



*“Abram Leads Forth His Family”  
17<sup>th</sup> Century Engraving by Gerard Hoyt*

*“Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”* - The identity of Terah’s three sons is repeated and the details of their lives, with an increasingly specific focus on Abram, is provided. *“Haran”* is included only to inform us that he was the father of *“Lot”* and to explain, by means of his early demise (*“While his father was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth.”*) the reason for Lot’s dependant relationship with his uncle Abram. *“Jubilees”* provides this colorful account of the death of Haran:

*“In the sixtieth year of his life...Abram arose in the night and burned the house of idols. And he burned everything in the house. And there was no man who knew. And they rose up in the night, and they wanted to save their gods from the midst of the fire. And Haran rushed to save them, and the fire flared up over him. And he was burned in the fire and died in Ur of the Chaldees*

*before Terah his father. And they buried him in Ur of the Chaldees.”* (Jubilees 12: 12-14)

*“Ur of the Chaldeans”* is cited as the place of Haran’s death, and thereby as the original home of Terah and his family. This view is confirmed by Genesis 15:7 where God says to Abram: *“I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”* (cf. Nehemiah 9:7) In his defense before the Sanhedrin, Stephen alludes to *“the land of the Chaldeans”* as Abraham’s home prior to his settling in the city of Haran in northern Mesopotamia:

***“The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’ So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran.”*** (Acts 7:2-4)

Genesis 11:32 will explain that Terah, his surviving sons, and their families set out from Ur on their way to Canaan. For reasons unspecified in the text. For reasons unspecified in the text, the family stopped at the city of Haran in northern Mesopotamia and settled there. Ultimately, only Abraham and his family would leave Haran and continue on their way to Canaan. ***“Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran they settled there.”***

The term ***“Chaldeans”*** comes into the English language by way of the Greek rendering of the ancient Akkadian word ***“kaldu”*** which referred to a Semitic speaking tribal people who settled in lower Mesopotamia in the marshes near the Persian Gulf.



***“Abram and Sarai on the Way to Canaan” by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld***

Chaldean tribesmen raided settlements and cities across the region throughout the second millennium B.C. This is reflected in the Bible's description of the misfortunes of Job:

***“While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties, and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you.’”*** (Job 1:17)

By the days of Nebuchadnezzar, late in the Old Testament era, the term had come to refer to the Babylonians generally and particularly to the ruling aristocracy of that kingdom. So, for example, the prophet Ezekiel warns of the King of Judah's downfall and exile: ***“I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and he will die there.”*** (Ezekiel 12:13; cf. also 23:23). ***“Ur of the Chaldeans”*** refers to the great Sumerian city-state of Ur in lower Mesopotamia which flourished in the third and fourth millennia B.C. Extensively excavation by Sir Leonard Woolery early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century revealed that Ur was a flourishing sophisticated urban center with palaces, temples, and elaborate homes as early as the third millennium B.C.

***“Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai..”*** - The narrative continues with a description of the marriages of Abram and his brother Nahor. Abram marries Sarai (Hebrew - *“princess”*). Sarai is Abram's his half-sister - that is to say that Abram and Sarai were both children of Terah, but by two different mothers: ***“Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife.”*** (Genesis 20:12) It would appear that the rules against incest late instituted by Moses were not yet in effect (cf. Leviticus 18:9; 20:17; Deuteronomy 27:22). Leupold cautions:

*“We dare not, however, judge relations such as these - which would now be properly termed incestuous - according to the standards of the present time. As long as it pleased God to let the human race descend from one pair, it must be conceded that for a time marriage between brothers and sisters was a necessity.”* (Leupold, p. 399)

Nahor married his niece, ***“Milcah, the daughter of Haran.”*** The text also mentions ***“Iscah”*** who is identified only as another of Haran's daughters. There is no other reference to her in Scripture and the reason for her inclusion here is obscure. Special emphasis is placed upon Sarai's inability to bear children because of the significance

that this reality will assume throughout the balance of the story of Abraham and his family - ***“Now Sarai was barren. She had no children.”***

***“Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.”*** - The Chapter concludes with the announcement of Terah’s death in Haran thus setting the stage for the story of Abraham and his descendants.