

## GENESIS 1–3

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

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

In 2:4, the word *LORD* is in all caps; this is different from when we see the word spelled *Lord* or *lord*. All lowercase *lord* can refer to anyone who is in charge, like your *landlord*. When it's capitalized as *Lord*, it means "Adonai," the Hebrew word for *Master*, which is a proper name of God, not just a general term. When you see all-caps *LORD*, it represents an ancient Hebrew spelling of YHWH. It has no vowels, so when we try to pronounce it, it sounds like

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“Yahweh” or “Jehovah.” This is God’s personal name. By telling us His name, He’s showing us *right out of the gate* that He wants to be personal with His creation. He’s not setting Himself apart as one not to be known or spoken to. He tells mankind His name! Despite that, it doesn’t bring Him to our level. YHWH is still Lord (Master), after all.

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

When Eve questions God’s goodness, she buys the lie that He’s holding out on her and decides she’d make a better god. That’s when the world was first fractured by sin, and it’s still fracturing. Not only do we still believe and act on the same lies, but the curses pronounced over Adam and Eve still resonate in our world today. Part of Eve’s curse is that her desire will be to control and rule over Adam. Part of Adam’s curse is that what he’s in charge of cultivating will work against him. We see this tension alive today: In general, women tend toward control and men tend toward passivity.

## TODAY’S GOD SHOT

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

## GENESIS 4-7

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

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

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

Why would fallen angels do this? Here's a theory: The angels who lived in heaven with God knew His plan from before creation was to send God

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the Son to earth as a human named Jesus to redeem and restore everything; but then they rebelled against God and His kingdom, so they tried to thwart and counterfeit His plan to deceive His people. It's possible the enemy is trying to corrupt the human bloodline to prevent the birth of the Messiah by counterfeiting the supernatural-natural union. We don't have all the information here, so we hold this with an open hand. But if this *did* happen the way the ancient Jews understood it, it makes sense that God would wipe out the crossbreed population via the flood. And in this scenario, the only family whose bloodline hasn't been infiltrated by fallen angels is Noah's, so God preserves them. Regardless of what happened, God sets apart this family, these particular descendants of Adam, as the family He is in relationship with.

The ark God has Noah build is one-and-a-half football fields long, the width of a six-lane interstate, and as tall as a four-story building. Noah probably takes the tiniest of each kind of animal, and there are more breeds of animals now, but God certainly knows the ark is the perfect size to hold whatever He needs it to hold. It probably doesn't smell great, though.

Then God mentions the word *covenant* for the first time. He singles out Noah as the start of this covenant; He's continuing to work through this one family of people. Before the flood comes, He tells Noah this is only the beginning of their relationship—he's not going to die in the waters. If the timeline is spot-on, the flood happened 1,656 years after Adam was created.

## TODAY'S GOD SHOT

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God's sovereignty is on display here. Nothing can thwart His will. Nothing can keep Him from His plan to rescue the people He entered into relationship with. The enemy's attempts to thwart the bloodline of Christ don't prevail. God is even sovereign over weather and creation. He's at work in all things to restore fallen humanity in relationship with Himself. What incredible news—He's where the joy is!