

Genesis & Bible Themes

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1.0 Introduction to Genesis

1.1 Why Study Genesis

1.1.1 We Need the Whole Story

As with any account, story or subject matter, it is important to start *'in the beginning'*.

Example: Imagine watching a film by starting at the half-way point. One could work hard enough to figure out and understand the story or subject matter at hand. But you would be missing quite a lot of the story. The same would be true if we only watch the first part of a film.

We need the **WHOLE** story!

For many Christians, we only or mainly understand God and his purposes through our knowledge of the New Testament, never grasping the importance or meaning of the book of Genesis and the rest of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. Further, without an understanding of the beginning, many of the events that happen later in the Bible do not make sense. Our knowledge even of the New Testament will be lacking somewhat without a foundation in the genesis of God's story.

Genesis is the book that answers the basic questions of who? what? why? when? and where? as they relate to God, to mankind, his people and his unfolding purposes. All of the other books are built upon the knowledge and revelation given in Genesis.

1.1.2 Some Important Factors

Here are a few facts we need to know about the Old Testament:

- The Old Testament makes up 77% of the Bible
- 2 Tim 3:16 says: *'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...'*

It is important to note that when Paul wrote this, the New Testament canon would not have been fully formed yet. Therefore it was more likely that Paul was referring here to the Old Testament writings, though we would not negate that the New Testament is also God-breathed.

- See also Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11

We need a solid understanding of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, and especially this first book known as Genesis.

1.1.3 Jesus' Read and Studied the Old Testament

The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible was the Bible Jesus knew and he knew it well.

Jesus had to study as he grew up: *'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature ...'* (Luke 2:52). *'In the beginning...'* was the story that Jesus knew. The accounts in the Old Testament were the stories his parents told him when he was a little child (see Deut 4:9; Ps 78:5-8). The Old Testament was the Scripture that Jesus studied intently.

These are the words he read, these were the stories he knew, these were the songs he sang...In short, the deeper you go into understanding the Old Testament, the closer you come to the heart of Jesus. (Chris Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, IVP, 1992, ix)

1.2 Name, Date & Authorship

1.2.1 Name

How did the book called *Genesis* get its name?

Originally, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The Hebrews called the first five books of the Old Testament the *Pentateuch* (pronounced *pen-ta-took*), which means 'the book of five' or 'five-fold book'. These same five books are also known as *Torah*, which to the Jews means *the law* or *instruction*.

This first book of the Pentateuch is called *Bereshith* by the Jews, which means 'in the beginning'.

About 300 B.C. a group of 70 Greek scholars came to Alexandria Egypt to translate the entire Hebrew Bible into Greek. This Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was called the *Septuagint*. The name Septuagint is derived from the Latin word *septuaginta* (seventy), which refers to the number of scribes believed to have translated it. The Septuagint was also known as the LXX, the Roman Numeral for the number 70.

In the Septuagint, the word 'beginning' or 'generations' is the Greek word *geneseōs*. It is the Greek word that Christians know to be the first book of the Bible because it is the book of beginnings or origins.

Gen 1:1 records:

In the beginning (Gr. genesis) God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen 1:1)

Matt 1:1 also records the Greek word 'genesis'.

This is the genealogy (Gr. genesis) of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1)

1.2.2 Authorship & Date

A. Traditional Approach

Traditionally, *Moses' name* is linked closely with Genesis, or even more the whole of the Pentateuch, because he has been seen as the author-compiler of these five books. From this traditional view, Moses would have mainly written this somewhere between the 15th and 13th centuries BC.

Scriptures in the Pentateuch that point to Mosaic authorship

- Ex 17:14; 24:4; Num 33:1-2; Deut 31:9, 24-25

Other Old Testament Scriptures that point to Moses as author

- Josh 1:7-8; 8:31, 34-35; 23:6; Judg 3:4; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 21:8; Ezk 6:18; Neh 8:1; 13:11

New Testament writers refer to Mosaic authorship

- Luke 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 15:21; Rom 10:5; 2 Cor 3:15

Jesus himself referred to Moses as author of this portion of Scripture

- Matt 19:8; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:29; 24:44

Both Jewish and early Christian tradition consistently associated the Pentateuch with Moses

- The *Talmud*, which is a collection of Jewish rabbinical laws, law decisions and comments on the laws of Moses, refers to the first five books of the Bible as the Books of Moses.
- The *Mishnah*, which is recorded oral conversations between rabbis as they discussed the proper interpretation and action required by the law, accepted the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

B. Critical Approach

Over the past 250 years or so, much critical scholarship has been directed towards how the Old Testament came to us, and specifically with the Pentateuch. A major proposal was that of the Documentary Hypothesis, which stated there were 4 main sources used in compiling the Pentateuch, which was finally put together in later centuries (during the exile or post-exile period):

1. J (Yahwist)
2. E (Elohimist)
3. D (Deuteronomistic)
4. P (Priestly)

The initial critical scholarship has gone through much development over the past two centuries as scholars have continued to study ancient near eastern history, archaeology, literature, etc. While the word 'critical' can seem quite alarming and faithless to Christians, not all of it must be seen that way.

C. Probable Edits & Updates

It would be easy to spot specific edits and updates to Genesis and the Pentateuch:

- Gen 12:6 – To tell us Canaanites were in the land '*at that time*' would mean someone was inserting this in a time after there were no Canaanites, possibly during David's or another king's reign (thus, after 1000 BC)
- Gen 14:14 – The city of Dan being recognised as the city of Dan, this being well before the Hebrew people had conquered the promised land and begun to name the cities of the land.
- Gen 36:31 – Tells us of the kings of Edom that reigned *before there were any Israelite kings*. This, too, has the imprint from the days of the Davidic monarchy or later.
- There are others that could be considered in the Pentateuch and Old Testament – i.e. passages with the phrase '*until this day*' (Judg 19:30; 2 Kgs 17:23) or the additions of Moses' death in Deut 34 and Joshua's death in Josh 24).

D. Summary

What we refer to as ‘authorship’ probably meant something a little different in an *ancient near eastern culture* thousands of years ago than it does for us today. Solid, biblical scholarship points out that Moses probably did not write all of the Pentateuch, that he used other sources to draw from (i.e. the creation account, Noah, the Book of the Wars of the Lord, etc), and that there were edits-updates done by scribes throughout Israel’s history.

Some might point out that Scripture says we should not add to God’s word (i.e. Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18-19). These passages probably don’t have a full Scripture canon in view like we have today. They are rather speaking directly into the context of God’s word coming into the Hebrew community at a particular point – don’t add to what God is saying to you right now. And, no doubt, the Revelation passage is specifically referring to the prophetic visions given forth by John in the book of Revelation.

Whereas some modern day scholars would attack Scripture because of the realities of edits, updates and additions, to do so would be imposing our modern, 21st century standards upon what it meant for the Pentateuch to be seen as having Mosaic authorship and authority. And for Christians to see any of this as destructive to their faith in God or the Scriptures would be to overreact to the situation.

We must receive the Scriptures as they were given to us – from their more ancient time and cultural framework, which functions quite differently to a modern era. We can be assured of the God-breathed and authoritative nature of Scripture (i.e. 2 Tim 3:16-17).

E. Helpful Resources

For more in depth study on this subject, refer to these other resources:

- Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1994, p.40-42.
- Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, Moody, 1991, p. 51-78.
- Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Moody, 1994, p.21-189
- Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, Baker Books, 1999, p.68-75.
- G.J. Wenham, *New Bible Commentary*, IVP, 2002, p.47-53.
- Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, Baker Academic, 2005
- Kenton Sparks, *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*, Baker Academic, 2008.
- Walter Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?*, IVP, 2001.

1.3 Overview of Genesis

As we noted earlier, our English title *Genesis* comes from the Greek word *geneseōs*, meaning ‘beginning’ or ‘generations’.

1.3.1 Divisions of Genesis

A simple division of Genesis is as follows:

Chapters 1-11	History of the beginnings of the Universe and Humanity	Four notable events	The Creation
			The Fall
			The Flood
			The Tower of Babel
Chapters 12-50	History of the beginnings of the Hebrew Nation	Four notable people	Abraham
			Isaac
			Jacob (Israel)
			Joseph

Though the above chart is a simple division of the book, the literary structure (or how the book is laid out as literature) of Genesis actually divides the book into *11 sections*:

- Introduction and Creation - 1:1-2:3
- The Account of the Heavens and the Earth - 2:4-4:26
- The Account of Adam - 5:1-6:8
- The Account of Noah - 6:9-9:28
- The Account of Shem, Ham and Japheth - 10:1-11:9
- The Account of Shem - 11:10-26
- The Account of Terah, or Abraham - 11:27-25:11
- The Account of Ishmael - 25:12-18
- The Account of Isaac - 25:19-35:29
- The Account of Esau - 36:1-43
- The Account of Jacob - 37:2-50:26

Self Study 1.3

Describe where and how *finality* is introduced in the book of Genesis?

Describe where and how *eternity* is anticipated in the book of Genesis?

Genesis could also be called the:

- **Book of Origins** or **Book of Firsts** – It is the first for life, man, woman, marriage, evil, sin, nations, culture, chosen people, covenant and a host of other ‘firsts’.
- **Book of Generations** or **Book of Families** – Genesis presents a particular kind of genealogy and it will eventually lead to the birth of Jesus.
- **Book of Covenants** – The first covenant is found in Genesis. There are seven major covenants found in the Bible with four of these major covenants found in Genesis (Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic). They form the foundation of all of the promises of God.
- **Book of Dispensations:**
 - Dispensation of the Fathers:
 - Adam - the father of mankind
 - Noah – the father of the nations
 - Abraham - the father of the promises

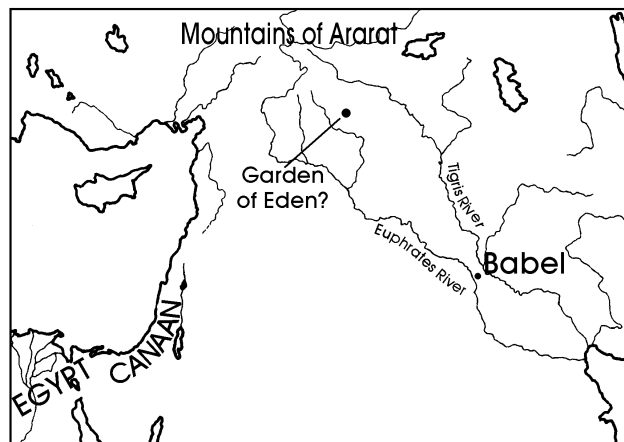
- **Book of Foundations** – Genesis is the foundation of our beginnings, of our faith, of science, of God’s word in Scripture.

1.3.2 Geography of Genesis

The primary geography for the book of Genesis occurs in five areas

- Garden of Eden – Adam & Eve
- Mountains of Ararat – Noah & family
- Babel – Peoples of the ancient near eastern world
- Canaan – Abraham & descendants
- Egypt – Joseph, Jacob & 12 patriarchs

The Geography of Genesis



2.0 Closer Study of Genesis 1-11

2.1 Beginnings of the Universe & Humanity (Genesis 1-2)

2.1.1 The Beginning of Creation

A. Differing Views of the Creation Account

There are 5 main views of origins. The first 4 would be accepted by various Christians, but not the last:

1. **Six-Day Creationism:** Also known as *young-earth creationists* or *fiat ('command') creationism*. This group believes that God brought everything into being by a direct and instantaneous act of creation. Each day of creation was a literal 24-hour time period. Thus, the earth is around 6,000 years old.
2. **Progressive Creationism:** This group would also be known as *old-earth creationists*. People who hold this view would claim that the days in Gen 1 do not refer to 24-hour time periods, but rather long periods of time. God was not only involved in the beginning of the creative process but also in key points following the initial act. Some would be willing to accept some forms of micro and macro-evolution, but not full biological evolution.
3. **Theistic Evolution:** Also known as *creationary-evolutionists*. They believe in a purposeful (teleological) creative process, but that God chose evolution as the means to bring about all creation, even the creation of human beings. They would also not deny the major tenets of the Christian faith – God as Creator, humanity made in God's image, humanity is sinful, humanity is in need of redemption, etc.

Three resources looking at this view:

- Denis Lamoureux, *I Love Jesus & I Accept Evolution*, Wipf & Stock, 2009.
 - Eds R.J. Berry & Michael Northcott, *Theology After Darwin*, Paternoster, 2009.
 - Peter Enns, *Inspiration & Incarnation*, Baker Academic, 2005.
4. **Deistic Evolution:** This view could be likened to the watchmaker who invents the watch, winds it up and he then lets the watch run on its own. Those believing in deistic evolution would claim that God started up the evolutionary process and has now removed himself, not to be involved in his creation.
 5. **Non-teleological Evolution:** This group would consist of atheists and agnostics who see the universe and life only evolving by blind chance without any purpose (non-teleological). There is no God and no ultimate right or wrong.

Of course, there are varying ideas within each of the views, but as a whole, these are 5 major views in our modern world.

We must keep these things in mind when it comes to the creation account:

- True science stands in agreement with God and his truth.
- We must allow God's good general (or natural) revelation (creation and the sciences) to inform us.
- We must not approach Scripture as if it were given to inform us about the details of science.

- The point of Gen 1 is not to prove the specifics of **HOW** or **HOW LONG** it took God to create.
- We must not try and make modern day science fit into an ancient near eastern account of origins. God used human beings of that day to communicate his revelation and truth.
- The creation account is recorded to reveal to us things of greater import: **WHO** created, the creative power and sovereignty of our God, that male and female have been created in God's image, etc.

B. Overview of the Creation Account

By studying the Hebrew text, we can see that Gen 1 is not given as straightforward prose (narrative), but it rather carries a kind of poetic feel over the six 'days' of creation. We can see the creation account in two groupings: *the days of forming* and *the days of filling*:

Days of Forming

Day 1: light, God separated the light from the darkness (vs3-5)

Day 2: waters below the vault, waters above the vault (vs7-8)

Day 3: dry land (v9-10) vegetation (vs11-12)

Days of Filling

Day 4: lights – sun, moon, and stars (vs14-16)

Day 5: sea and winged creatures (vs20-21)

Day 6: beasts of the earth and man (vs24-27)

Day 7: Rest

C. Specifics of the Creation Account (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Intro – Gen 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen 1:1)

Of all the phrases in all books, or of all of the thoughts thought by humanity, no single sentence that has ever been written or uttered or thought has more significance or impact than Gen 1:1.

In one sentence, it refutes all false religions. It refutes:

1. **Atheism** because the universe was created by God
2. **Pantheism** (a doctrine that equates nature and God together) because God is transcendent of His creation
3. **Polytheism** because one God created all things
4. **Humanism** because God, not man, is the focus of creation
5. **Purposeless Evolution** because God created all things

See Ps 90:1-2

The reality of creation speaking and testifying of our God:

See Ps 19:1-6
See Rom 1:18-20

The Hebrew word for God, Elohim: Any word ending in *-im* speaks of plurality, i.e., *cherubim* speaks of many cherub beings or *seraphim* speaks of many seraph beings. Many see this particular reference of Elohim as pointing to God's triune-nature from the beginning. While we do believe in a triune God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all at creation – it is probably too much to denote that the title Elohim is speaking of God's plurality in unity (or triune nature). We come to the knowledge and revelation of a triune God as we study the *whole* of Scripture, including the New Testament.

'In the beginning God created' implies several things:

1. **The transcendental nature of God** – God is above and apart from his creation.
2. **The dependent nature of the universe** – The universe is not sustainable on its own but requires the involvement of God's continuing presence. (this is not evident from Genesis 1:1 but is self revealing when based on #1 and other verses in the Bible such as Col 1:17 and Heb 1:3)
3. **The self-existence of God** – He existed before creation and is not dependent on his creation for his existence.
4. **Creation ex nihilo** (Latin pronounced *ex-knee'-ill-oo*) – Means 'created out of nothing'; it means that when God began the creation of heaven and earth, nothing else existed except God and that God created all that exists out of nothing. The visible was created out of the invisible. See Rom 4:17.

See Heb 11:3

In these intro verses, we find an overall summary statement of what is being – the heavens and the earth. The word *heavens* is the Hebrew word *shamayim* which, has many meanings in the Old Testament. *Shamayim* is used to mean everything from 'sky' in Gen 1:26; 'highest heavens' in Deut 10:14; and even 'astrologers' in Isa 47:13.

This would not be where heaven, as in the kingdom of heaven/God, was created. The kingdom of heaven has always existed. Rather, this is the creation of our heavens.

Gen 1:2 – There is also *preparation* for God's creative power to break in – formless, empty, darkness and the Spirit is hovering. God is ready to create!

Day 1 – Gen 1:3-5

4 specific patterns to note:

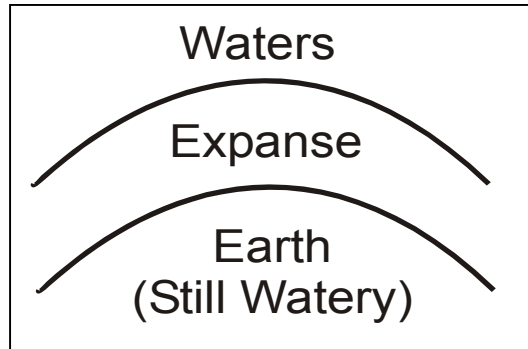
1. **God speaks and things happen** (vs3) – God's word is powerful and will come to pass (i.e. Isa 55:10-11)
2. **God's creation is good** (vs4) – God does not desire a sacred/secular split. God's creation of the physical world was good.
3. **Separation of light and darkness** (vs4) – God has been calling light out of darkness ever since sin entered our world.
4. **Evening first, then morning** (vs5) – Our work should come out of rest. Not only that, but the word *re-create* is about recreating in creation.

Notes on Day 1: At this point, the earth is still 'watery'. Everything that existed at that time was either water or light.

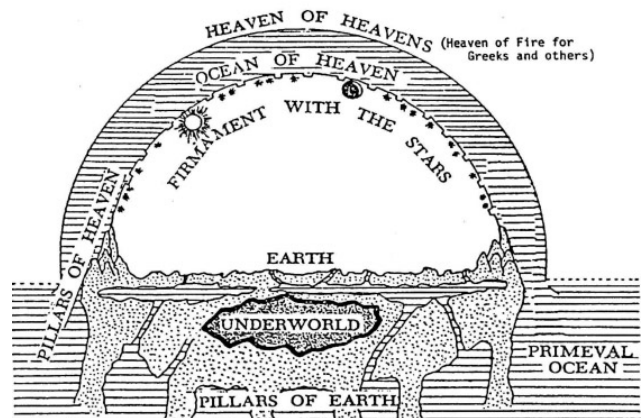
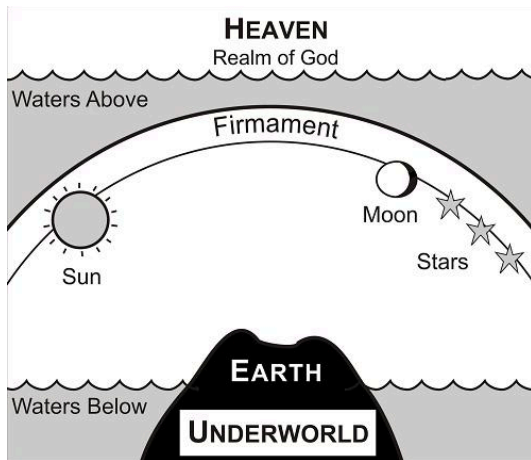
But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. (2 Pet 3:5)

Day 2 – Gen 1:6-8

God creates an 'expanse' or 'vault' between the waters. The Hebrew word for expanse is *ragia*. In vs20, expanse is the place that birds fly.



Two Pictures Below Showing the Ancient Near Eastern View of the Heavens and Earth



Notes on Day 2: At this time, there is still no dry ground or 'earth'.

Day 3 – Gen 1:9-13

The earth and seas are created; each is gathered into one place. For the first time, there is dry land appearing. Land has always had a tremendous importance in the Bible. We will talk more about land in the coming sections of the notes.

In day three, the first life is also created. Built within this life is the ability to reproduce after its own kind.

Notes on Day 3: There are some growth principles that God installed within life. Notice that a plant doesn't continue to grow and grow and grow, but reaches a

certain point and then reproduces. It is self-sufficient as far as procreation goes. Nor does it need to be created again to make another.

Day 4 – Gen 1:14-19

Lights are created. This is a different Hebrew word than the *light* found in vs3. In vs3 the Hebrew word for light is *or* and suggests a single source from which the light flows. In vs14 the Hebrew word for lights is *meorah*, which means ‘luminaries’, which are multiple sources of light.

The two great lights were created: the sun and the moon. Also the stars were created. One of the reasons the two great lights and the stars were created was for serving as ‘*signs to mark sacred times, and days and years*’.

Notes on Day 4: Notice that governing order was created at this time. It says that ‘*the greater light [will] govern the day and the lesser light [will] govern the night*’. The Hebrew word used is *memshalah* and means to govern or rule over.

Day 5 – Gen 1:20-23

Living creatures were created: ocean creatures and land creatures.

Notes on Day 5: Notice that the animals received a blessing. This is the first time that a blessing is given from God. It is a microcosm of God’s greater blessing given to humanity in vs26-28.

Day 6 – Gen 1:24-31

This day begins with God saying, ‘*Let the land produce living creatures ...*’. But in vs26, God says ‘*Let us make mankind in our image...*’. Of all of the created things, God has said, ‘*Let there be...*’ but of humanity he said, ‘*Let us make*’.

Compare vs26 with Gen 2:7.

Notes on Day 6: Humanity was made in the image of God, not of angels.

We also find that the word ‘man’ in vs26 is the Hebrew word ‘*adam*’. Vs26 goes on to say, ‘*that they...*’ which would indicate that the word *adam* is the generic word for humanity, male and female. This is backed up in both vs27 and vs28.

Clearly, in creation, God creates mutuality amongst the 2 genders, making male and female equally valued by God. This is clarified in Paul’s ‘new creation’ theology.

28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:28-29)

It has often been argued against this point of view [specifically the old distinctions between male and female being broken down in Christ] that [Galatians 3:26-29] is a soteriological text, having to do with people from all of these categories coming to Christ on the equal ground of faith. So it is, but to divorce soteriology from ecclesiology [understanding the church] in Paul is theologically disastrous. Salvation in Paul’s view has not to do with God’s populating heaven with countless individuals, but with creating a people for

his name through Christ and the Spirit... Thus, the present text is ecclesiological by the very fact that it is soteriological. (Gordon Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text*, p59, footnote 5)

It was not God who named the female as 'woman'. It was Adam (see Gen 2:23). He also had the responsibility of naming the woman as *Eve* (see Gen 3:20).

God's overall statement after the whole creation is that it was 'very good' (Gen 1:31)!

Day 7 – Gen 2:1-3

This day of creation is the only one with no 'evening and morning'. It is also the only day that is sanctified, or set-apart for a specific purpose.

Contained in this account are the three components of Sabbath: Finished work, rest, and sanctification.

Notes on Day 7: Adam and Eve began their first day with rest.

2.1.2 The Beginning Image

One of the most incredible things for people to know is that they have been created in the image of the one true God.

26 Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27)

The most vile murderer retains more of the image of God than a beautiful golden-brown lion charging across the African wilderness bearing a red-orange sunset in the background (see Ecc 3:11).

The Hebrew word for 'image' is *tselem* and the word for 'likeness' is *demuth*. We can see that in the first nine chapters of Genesis alone, the two words are used interchangeably:

Gen 1:26 – image & likeness

Gen 1:27 – image

Gen 5:1 – likeness

Gen 5:3 – likeness & image (though this is used of Adam & his son)

Gen 9:6 – image

We might explain the image of God as falling under these 2 main categories:

1. **Structural:** This sees the word 'image' as a *noun*. In our very structure and make-up, human beings are in the image of God. Thus, an incapacitated human in hospital still bears the image of God.
2. **Relational-Functional:** This speaks of the word 'image' as a *verb*. The image of God is found in our relationship with others. Not only that, but through our roles and functions as fathers, mothers, farmers, leaders, educators, scientists, etc., we can see the image of God being displayed.

Of course, because of sin, the image of God has been distorted and marred in humanity. Thankfully, this image is restored, and is being restored, in those who are new creations in Christ, and it will be perfected when Christ returns!

As we have noted, God has created *both* male and female in his image (Gen 1:27). Therefore, there is something unique about woman that enables her to image God in a way that man cannot. In the same way, there is also something distinctive about man that he is able to image God in a way that woman cannot.

For further study on the image of God in humanity:

- Anthony Hoekema, *Created In God's Image*, Eerdmans, 1994.

2.1.3 The Beginning Commission

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' (Gen 1:28)

Here, we could identify this as the 'Great Commission of the Old Testament'. God was ruling king, Adam and Eve were to be submitted to that rule, and they were now called to be fruitful with children that would follow in those same footsteps. And this was to continue from one generation to the next.

Christ would later restate God's heart as he gave his Great Commission to the disciples.

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' (Matt 28:18-20)

2.1.4 The Beginning Garden

A. Two Creation Accounts?

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. (Gen 2:4)

This is the beginning of the second 'section' of Genesis. Is this a second creation account?

Some factors to consider:

- The author of Genesis is moving from the overall perspective of Gen 1:1-2:3 down into a more detailed perspective of the first humans in Gen 2:5-25.
- The author of Genesis might be drawing upon two specific creation traditions and is allowing for the two unique traditions to speak to God's people.

Whatever view we take on the first 2 chapters of Genesis, we should see an overall unity and harmonization between the two passages here.

B. Woman Formed From Man

18 The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' 19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. 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. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 21 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 then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Gen 2:18-22)

This passage is heavily discussed between those of the complementarian and egalitarian views.

Defining Terms:

- **Complementarianism** = Sees equality in both men and women, but still recognises the inherent leadership of males.
- **Egalitarianism** = Sees equality in both men and women, even allowing for women to carry leadership roles in the church and home.

From this passage, it is obvious that Adam, the male, was created first. Then Eve, the female, was created.

Much understanding of gender roles is wrapped up in the word '*helper*' found in vs18 and 20 (*help meet* in the older KJV). Not only that, but because God created woman '*out of*' man, by using one of man's ribs, some complementarians can deduce that this is a pointer to the subordinate role of woman to man.

But what of this word '*helper*' in vs18 and 20?

1. **Helper Suitable For**

In this verse, the full phrase we need to look at is '*helper suitable for*' (NIV), or in other translations, '*helper fit for*' (ESV). The word translated as *helper* is the Hebrew word *'ezer*. Interestingly enough, this word is actually used many times to describe *God's role with us* (see Ex 18:4; Deut 33:29; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9-111). And, of course, God is our '*'ezer*, our *helper*! Thus, we should not see the word '*helper*' as describing a subordinate role here.

Millard Erickson summarises this Hebrew term with these words:

'This would suggest that the helper envisioned in Genesis 2:18 is not inferior to the one helped. Rather the helper is to be thought of as a coworker or enabler.' (*Christian Theology*, Baker, 1994, p546)

The second part of the phrase we are considering contains the words '*suitable for*' or '*fit for*'. In referencing the well-known *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Erickson points out that the phrase '*suitable for*' (*neged* in Hebrew) would be faithfully translated as either '*corresponding to*' or '*equal to*'. Thus, the English translation would be: *I will make him a helper corresponding to, or equal to, him*. Thus, there is nothing inherent in this phrase to teach who has the lead role amongst the two sexes?

2. **Out Of**

Next, by reading from the text that woman was taken '*out of*' man, being formed from *his* rib, some will see this as a pointer to the subordinate role of women. There could

be the assumption that, if woman were to have equal status as man, then *God would have formed her out of the dust just as He had formed man out of the dust*. Yet, since God formed her *after* man and *out of* man, this shows a somewhat inferior status.

But to put a restrictive conclusion on God's formation of woman is doing a bit of eisegesis with the text (reading our own presuppositions into the text). In contradistinction to such conclusions, to note that woman had been taken '*out of*' man is to recognise she, in fact, stands on equal footing with him. Such an action by God was a statement that *man's equal helper who corresponded to him would come from, or out of, him*. God would grace man with someone of equal standing with him, corresponding to him. This is why Adam could proclaim with excitement and wonder:

This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man. (Gen 2:23)

He was filled with awe at the glorious wisdom of God to make his equal helper *out of* him. Not only that, but we have already seen how both male and female carry the same responsibilities as laid out in Gen 1:26-28.

Thus, we must conclude that Gen 2:18-22 does not teach us that women hold a subordinate role to men across general roles or leadership roles. On the contrary, it teaches the exact opposite – men and women, created equally in God's image, are partners of equal standing.

3. Naming the Animals

One argument that could arise from complementarians in pointing to the lead role of the male is that *Adam alone* was given responsibility for naming all the animals (Gen 2:20). But, what we must note is that woman had not yet been created in the Genesis account. How do you have superiority over another when that person had not yet been created?

Again, note that Gen 1 has already established that both had the same mandate to be fruitful, multiply and rule. But, in the more detailed account of Gen 2, we see that woman had not yet been created when God gave this specific responsibility to man.

Thus, as we saw above, God was about to create an '*ezer*' out of man that would be the perfect partner for him in fulfilling the purposes of God.

Therefore, we cannot lean on the argument that Adam's responsibility of naming the animals was proof of who has leadership or authority over the other. Such a notion fails to be found in the biblical text. We need to let go of that argument.

2.1.5 Comparing Genesis & Revelation



Genesis	Revelation
Heaven & earth created	New heaven(s) and earth
Origin of sun, moon, & stars	No need for sun, moon, stars (21:23)
Death enters (3:19)	No more death (21:4)
Curse enters (3:17)	No more curse (22:3)
Tree of knowledge of good & evil	No more tree of knowledge
Tree of life denied (3:24)	Tree of life restored (22:14)
Rainbow over earth	Rainbow emanates from the Throne
Gold in the land	Gold in the city (21:21)
God walking in the Garden	God dwelling in the city (21:3)
Coat of skins for covering (3:21)	Fine linen, white & clean (19:4)
Satan opposing	Satan banished (20:10)
Sweat of the face	Tears wiped away (21:4)
Redeemer promised (3:15)	Redemption complete (5:9-10)
River flowing around the garden	River flowing through the garden (22:1-2)
Men made in the image of God	Men restored to the image of God
Babel/Babylon	New Jerusalem
Gathering of the sea (1:10)	No more sea (21:1)

2.2 Beginnings of Sin & Redemption (Genesis 3)

2.2.1 Entrance of Sin

Read Gen 3:1-24

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Gen 2:25)

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Gen 3:7)

Also known as 'the Fall', as in Adam and Eve's 'fall' into sin.

Though God had established humanity as the crown of his creation and had given them the great honour of carrying out his purposes on earth, humanity disobeyed God and fell into sin.

A. Satan’s Role in the Fall

In this account, Satan (the adversary) is depicted as a serpent.

Satan is also referred to as a serpent in the New Testament: 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9-15; Rev 20:2.

Satan is a liar. This is what Jesus says of Satan:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. 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)

Satan asks the very first question in the Bible. It is Satan’s task to cause us to question God’s word, which is an expression of God’s will.

Did God really say...? (Gen 3:1)

Paronomasia means ‘word play’. God has used word play in Scripture. And, so, we would expect the great deceiver to do the same, but within his nature of being a liar.

The Pattern of Deceit		
God’s word	Satan’s words	Satan’s deceit
(Gen 2:16) And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden...’	(Gen 3:1) He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’	Changing to sound more restrictive
(Gen 2:17) ‘...but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’	(Gen 3:4-5) ‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’	Challenges/questions God’s word. Entices with God-like knowledge

B. Eve’s Role in the Fall

Eve was deceived:

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. (2 Cor 11:3)

And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. (1 Tim 2:14)

Her deceit translated into enticement:

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... (Gen 3:6a)

Enticement led to transgression:

...she took some and ate it. (Gen 3:6b)

Transgression led to affecting others:

She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. (Gen 3:6c)

Something else to consider is that we are told Adam was there 'with her'. As her covenant partner, Adam could have provided stronger covering in communicating the full words of God from the beginning and helping to guard against the tempter.

C. Adam's Role in the Fall of Man

She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. (Gen 3:6c)

Something else to consider is that we are told Adam was there 'with her'. As her covenant partner, Adam should have provided stronger covering in communicating the full words of God from the beginning and helping to guard against the tempter.

As the father of humanity, the created order has come into sin:

In such a covenant Adam was God's representative in creation, God's prophet, priest and king. Organically, the entire human race was in Adam, and legally he represented them. By virtue of this connection it was inevitable that death should pass upon the entire human race, as St. Paul in fact observes (Romans 5:12-19). (William Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*, Paternoster, 2002, p.45)

See Rom 5:12; 8:20-22

What Augustine called 'original sin'.

- **Original sin:** passed on through the sin of our first parents
- **Actual sin:** sin we actually participate in as sinful human beings

It was through the death and resurrection of Christ, *the second Adam*, that new creation life was made available to all:

See Rom 5:18-19; 1 Cor 15:22; 1 Cor 15:45-49

D. God's Role in the Fall

God was not caught off guard by Adam and Eve's sin. Since before time, the plan of redemption had always included the freewill choice of man and his ability to choose evil over good. The love of God is demonstrated in that He had already planned for redemption before the foundation of the world. However, God did allow the Fall to happen. Since He is omniscient and that He allowed that to happen, by deduction we must infer that He allowed it to happen.

However, careful note must be taken that:

- God is not to be blamed for the event
- God does not bless the event

We will pick up the theme of redemption below.

E. Notes on the Fall

From where did evil come?

Evil is not a created thing. And to think that God created evil or sin is blasphemy. Rather, evil is the non-created by-product of creation.

For example, when the first automobile was created, it was a wonderful thing. It allowed mobility and expansion and broadening of horizons. However, when the first automobile was made, the potential for a car crash automatically materialized. It is a by-product of the creation. It may have not happened yet, but the *potential* for the crash was automatically there. To say that the person who invented the automobile is guilty of inventing the car crash is ludicrous. Evil is the non-created by-product of the created good. It is not a creation, but a result.

So when God said, '*It is good*' (Gen 1:4), the *potential* for bad was automatically there. However, Scripture clearly records that God does *allow* evil. Not only that, but God is very good at turning around evil for good:

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Gen 50:20)

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Rom 8:28-30)

2.2.2 Entrance of Redemption

The wonder of the gracious character of the Creator manifests itself immediately. Judgment indeed must fall. But even in the midst of judgment hope for restoration appears. God binds himself now to redeem a people to himself. The very words that pronounce the curse of the covenant of creation also inaugurate the covenant of redemption. (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p91)

God did not switch to 'Plan B' after the Fall. God's original intention remained the same – having a people who would '*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it*' (Gen 1:28). But God would now introduce redemption into the picture so that the Great Commission of Gen 1:28 might be continued.

The New Testament era is commonly referred to as the 'age of grace', and it is a correct statement, for the greatest revelation of grace came in Christ (John 1:16-17). Yet, we can also see that, throughout the whole of Scripture, God's grace has always

been evident. Even in the midst of the sin of our first parents, we see the clear presence of grace.

Six major pointers of God's generous grace in Gen 3:

1. The seed promise of the gospel (vs15) – the first gospel
2. Woman would still bear children (vs15-16) – to help continue the Great Commission of Gen 1:28
3. Man would still work (vs17-19) – work is good and part of God's good purposes
4. Food would still be brought from the ground (vs18-19) – daily bread provided
5. Adam's naming of his wife (vs20) – calls her Eve, meaning 'life' or 'living'
6. God's provision of skins for their nakedness (vs21) – to cover their nakedness in loss of innocence; the first blood spilt, a picture of the redemption we have in Christ

A. The First Gospel

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. (Gen 3:15)

The greatest act of grace we see is the first proclamation of the gospel. Theologians refer to this as the *protoevangelium*, which is a Latin term meaning 'first gospel'.

By declaring 'enmity' between Satan and the woman, God was declaring war on the great adversary, and he would get all the glory in the end.

God's glory as the great Creator has been assaulted. His handiwork has been disharmonized. Not simply for the sake of man but for the glory of God redemption is undertaken. (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p95)

B. The Seed Promised

The Hebrew for 'seed' in Gen 3:15, *pleroo*, is singular and therefore ultimately speaks of *one person* who would come from the woman to wage war against the enemy. Through the pages of the New Testament, we know that this great seed is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Though Satan would '*strike his heel*' at the cross, Christ would '*crush [Satan's] head*'. This crushing began initially with the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. It continues today and will be completed when Christ returns:

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. (1 Cor 15:25)

This word 'seed' could also be seen as a *unified plurality* – a people that would make up the united seed. It is Paul who encouraged the church in Rome with these words:

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Rom 16:20)

At first reading, it could seem that the enemy had thwarted God's plans, but we know that is not true by any means. God's purposes were to remain that his earth be filled with his rule and glory (Gen 1:28; see also Hab 2:14). But he now commenced a redemptive relationship with humanity, promising to provide a seed from the woman that would deal with the defiant enemy of God and his people.

2.3 Beginning Children – Cain & Abel (Genesis 4)

1 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the LORD I have brought forth[c] a man.'
2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. (Gen 4:1-2)

Cain and Abel are the first two children of Adam and Eve. They are not born in Paradise, the Garden of Eden, but in a fallen world.

- **Cain** is a tiller of the soil. A farmer
- **Abel** is a keeper of flocks. A shepherd

3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. (Gen 4:3-5)

The problem was not with what *kind* of offering, fruit or flock. Here we have an issue of the heart. Specifically, we can see Abel brought 'fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock'. When we bring worship to God, are we bringing some of it or *the best*?

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. (Heb 11:4)

11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 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 3:11-12)

Notes from Chapter 4

A. Different Responses – Adam & Cain

Adam's response after his fall and banishment from the Garden – Gen 3:20
Cain's response after his fall – Gen 4:5 & 16

B. Sin's Affect

Notice the cascading effect of sin on the generations that follow? Reading the rest of ch4 gives a list of the descendants of Cain.

Lamech is the first recorded *polygamist* and the second *murderer*. He even boasts of his murder to his two wives – Gen 4:23-24.

C. Fresh Start – Seth

Ch4 concludes with another fresh start with a new son named Seth. He was to replace Abel and continue on the 'seed of the woman'. An important concluding statement takes place in the last verse of the chapter:

At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD. (Gen 4:26b)

2.4 Re-beginnings with Noah (Genesis 6-9)

2.4.1 God's Grace Towards Noah

5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the LORD said, 'I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.' (Gen 6:5-7)

Here we see that the Lord had *regret*. But didn't he know all things, including that this would happen to humanity. We see a similar statement with Saul's kingship (1 Sam 15:11).

While one essential characteristic of God is his immutability, or unchangeableness, we need to allow for God to communicate to humans as humans. It helps us understand him. Thus, some theologians describe this as *anthropomorphic language*, meaning *God is being described as if he were human*.

Sin had entered the world through Adam and Eve, and it spread quickly. But...

Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD. (Gen 6:8)

The word 'favour' is translated 'grace' in the old KJV. This is the Hebrew word *chen*, which means 'favour, grace or acceptance'. It is true that we read that Noah was 'a righteous man' (see 6:9). But this does not mean he earned God's gracious favour.

Gen 6:9 begins with this statement: '*These are the records of the generations.*' As we noted earlier in the notes, this phrase, or its equivalent, occurs 10 times in Genesis and it always indicates the beginning of another major section in the book (see Gen 5:1; 10:1). Thus, there is a distinct separation between the statement that '*Noah found favour [or grace] in the eyes of the LORD*' (6:8) and the statement that '*Noah was a righteous man*' (6:9).

Therefore, Noah was chosen according to God's grace, not his righteous efforts.

There are many other passages throughout Scripture which point to the fact that righteousness comes through faith by grace:

Gen 15:7; Rom 3:28; Eph 2:8-9

2.4.2 God's Plan With Noah

The LORD told Noah of his plan to destroy man and the earth (Gen 6:13). God commanded Noah to build an ark for his family. He also commanded them to bring into the ark seven pairs of every clean animal as well as one pair of every unclean animal (7:2-3). The additional clean animals would be needed for the offerings Noah would offer to the LORD once leaving the ark (8:20), not to mention for food (9:3). Noah responded to the LORD with faithfulness:

And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. (Gen 7:5)

The LORD then sent rain for forty days and forty nights upon the earth. From the time of the beginning of the rain to the time that Noah and his family came out of the ark on dry ground, there had elapsed one year and ten days (see Gen 7:11 and 8:13-14). Judgment had come upon the wicked leaving righteous Noah and his family, in one sense, with a new earth and a fresh beginning. This is emphasised in 8:13:

By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth.

Following this episode, God restates his heart and purpose from the beginning:

1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. 2 The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. (Gen 9:1-2)

The account of Noah and his family is a picture of the new covenant salvation we now celebrate in Jesus Christ. Also, 1 Pet 3:18-22 shows the importance of water baptism and compares it with the waters of the flood.

We also see the 2 Pet 3:3-10 shows how the judgment of Noah was a type of the judgment to come at the end of the age. In all, the goal is not a destroyed earth, rather the words of 2 Pet 3 are apocalyptic imagery describing judgment on the enemies of God so that, like in Noah's day, there might be a renewed earth for God's people to enjoy.

2.4.3 Noah Compared with Other Ancient Accounts

Many early origins' accounts in Genesis (specifically the creation of Adam, the Garden of Eden and Noah) have somewhat parallel accounts with other ancient near eastern accounts of origins.

One great example is seen between the biblical account of Noah and the flood as paralleled with the ancient Mesopotamian account of Utnapishtim in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

While other existing flood accounts might sound alarming to some Christians, believing such an account to be unique only to the Bible, we must remember that other accounts in varying ancient writings show something of the real, historical nature of the story.

With historical-critical scholarship, some might argue against the biblical account of Noah and the flood. But, in answer to such, we can consider these two factors:

- It is possible that the biblical author-compiler of Genesis was taking well-known ancient origin's accounts and, under the guidance of God, was shaping them for the Hebrew community to understand God's revelation and truth.
- It is possible that the biblical writer used storied-myth to communicate God's revelation and truth. While we tend to think of myths as 'false', and thus as wrong, bad, deceptive, etc, such is not meant with the use of this word. It is a storied account given to reveal truths about our origins. As one scholar defined it:

...[myth] is an ancient, premodern, prescientific way of addressing questions of ultimate origins and meaning in the form of stories: Who are we? Where do we come from? (Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, Baker Academic, 2005, p40)

Two interesting and helpful resources:

- Matthews and Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, Paulist Press, 1997
- Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, Baker Academic, 2005

2.5 Beginnings of Many Languages (Genesis 10-11)

2.5.1 The Table of Nations – Genesis 10

Following the flood, Genesis records the genealogy of Noah. More than a list of names or a genealogy, it became an important historical document known as the 'Table of Nations'. From it can be traced all of the ancient civilizations in the Middle East. It is outside of the scope of this study to trace all of the descendants of Noah, but for the sake of demonstrating the value of this important chapter, let us consider one of the descendants.

1 This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood. 2 The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshek and Tiras. (Gen 10:1-2)

These verses record that Gomer is the son of Japheth. In the *Table Of Nations* found in the Appendix, you will see that Gomer settled to the north of the Black Sea.

According to James Boice in his book, *Genesis Volume 1*:

The historian Herodotus, (5th century B.C. Greek historian known as the father of history) records that Gomer's family gave the name Cimmeria (the Crimea) to the area. They later expanded westward into Europe and settled in France as the Gauls, in Spain as the Galacia, and in Briton as the Celts—all of which names are related, being variations on the original three-consonant name G-M-R.

Most interesting of these nations is that they represent a fulfilment of the prophecy in Gen 9:27 concerning Japheth and Canaan.

May God extend Japheth's territory; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth. (Gen 9:27)

That is exactly what happened. From the Table of Nations found in the Appendix, you will see that the descendants of Japheth were indeed enlarged to include all of Europe and some of Asia, while Canaan became enslaved over and over again.

2.5.2 The Tower of Babel – Genesis 11

Gen 11:1 begins with a people unified in a common language. Being able to speak the same language is critical to communication, and thereby unification. It is difficult to settle arguments when you don't speak the same language.

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. (Gen 11:1)

Those who went east into the area of Shinar (associated with the area of Babylonia), they decided to build a memorial to themselves – a tower reaching to heaven. We can see the imagery of pride, arrogance and rebellion as we read these words:

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; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth. (Gen 11:4)

Whereas the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel was God's judgment and curse to divide a sinful humanity, many see the gift of tongues at Pentecost (Acts 2:1f) as a reversal of that curse so that, by God's Spirit, Christ's body might be unified across the varying world languages.

Gen 11:10 begins the fifth toledot concerning the descendants of Shem, which include Abraham and begins the great section of the book of Genesis concerning the patriarchs. The universal nature of the first section of Genesis now gives way to just one man and his descendants.

3.0 Introduction to Hermeneutics

The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God. (A.W. Tozer)

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me (Jesus of Nazareth, John 5:39)

3.1 General Hermeneutics

3.1.1 Four Main Ways to Study Scripture & Theology

1. **Biblical Theology** (or **exegetical theology**): Understanding the Bible as we study it book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. For example, studying the book of Genesis.
2. **Systematic Theology**: Studying specific themes or topics in the Bible. This would be done by looking at all specific verses and teachings on a particular topic and, then, gathering that data into one formulated 'system'. For example, we can study the theme of Christ (Christology), humanity (anthropology) or the Holy Spirit (pneumatology).
3. **Historical theology**: How the biblical text and theology have been understood throughout the history of the church.
4. **Practical theology**: (or **pastoral theology**) How the biblical text can be applied to our lives.

Three great resources to introduce one to understanding the Bible:

- Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, Zondervan, 3rd edition, 2003.
- Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible*, Zondervan, 2008.
- N.T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*, HarperOne, 2011.

3.1.2 Defining Terms

The origin of the word *hermeneutics* is said to refer to Hermes, the Greek god, who was the messenger of the gods.

Be that as it may, the word translates the Greek *hermēneuō*, meaning 'to interpret', and is technically the theory of interpretation, not only of texts, but the interpretation and understanding of any act of communication whether it is written, oral, verbal or non-verbal (such as symbols or symbolic acts). But in practice, the word almost always is used to refer to biblical hermeneutics, which concerns *the science and art of interpretation, understanding, and application of the biblical text*.

Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread. (Luke 24:35)

The word 'told' in Luke 24:35 is the Greek word *exegeomai*, from which we get our word *exegesis*.

Exegesis is the application of hermeneutics. We utilise the principles of hermeneutics to help lead to good exegesis, or telling-explaining what a passage is saying. Hermeneutics stands in the same relationship to exegesis that a rule-book stands to a game. If hermeneutics is the given rules, then exegesis is the game itself. The rules are not the game and the game is meaningless without the rules.

Hermeneutics must be distinguished, but not removed, from the other two critical studies that make up solid exegesis. That is textual criticism and biblical introduction.

Textual criticism is the study of what the exact words used in the original texts and manuscripts are communicating. Every text is scrutinized in light of ancient manuscripts, ancient documents, evaluating conflicting authorities, etc, to arrive at a determination as to its meaning.

Biblical introduction, or isagogics, is the in-depth, historical study of the books of the Bible. This branch of study is concerned with the author, the age, the canon, origin, editing and corruption of text through time.

These two elements of textual criticism and biblical introduction are added to, and included in, the study of hermeneutics to allow the complete exegesis of a text, passage or book of the Bible.

Being able to exegete a passage is of vital importance as a study or reference, but it is not the delivery vehicle. While exegesis is the study process, the delivery process is called *homiletics*.

Homiletics is the science and the art of preaching.

Exegesis is to hermeneutics as preaching is to homiletics.

When good exegesis is combined with good homiletics, the result is Biblical growth to the body of Christ.

3.1.3 Three General Scriptural Contexts to Consider

1. **Historical-grammatical context:** What is the text saying in its own context of history, language, culture, etc?
2. **Christological context:** (or **teleological context**, *telos* meaning 'complete' or 'goal') What is the text saying in light of the coming of Christ and the new covenant?
3. **Devotional & prophetic context:** God speaking from the text into our lives and specific contexts.

3.1.4 Four Challenges to Hermeneutics

In the above section, we mentioned the importance of understanding what is known as the grammatical-historical context of Scripture. This could be fleshed out into 4 specific areas.

A. Language

The Bible comes to us in 3 major languages – three languages which have very different structures and idioms from our own.

- Hebrew – the Old Testament

- Aramaic – a little of the Old and New Testaments
- Greek – the New Testament

We have to remember that we are reading translations and not the ancient languages. Thus, we must bear in mind that even every translation contains an element of interpretation and paraphrase. A literal English translation of some Hebrew or Greek idioms and colloquial expressions may not render what the original writer meant at all.

Example: Jesus' response to his mother, Mary, in John 2:3-4

3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.' 4 'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

Literally, Jesus' response could be read, *'Woman, what to you and to me?'*

B. History and Geography

Many centuries have elapsed between the time of the original writers and readers, and the 21st century. Knowledge of the historical situation that pertained at the time of the writing sheds much light on the meaning of the text. Related to the need to understand the historical situation, is the necessity also of understanding something of the geographical territory covered by the biblical record. This helps enormously in understanding the narrative and prophetic portions of Scripture.

Example: It might be interesting to note that the land of Judah had mainly three territories: the Mediterranean coastal plain, the Shephelah plateau and the mountains of Judah.

C. Culture

There is a significant difference between the cultures of the Old and New Testaments and us. We tend unconsciously to view biblical situations through eyes that are conditioned by our own culture and experiences. Failure to recognise the difference between the cultures then and now can result in serious misunderstanding of the meaning of some biblical terms and actions.

Example: To interpret the vision in Ezk 1:4-21 as prophecy about Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's) or Jer 10:1-5 as prophecy about Christmas trees.

D. Philosophy and Worldview

Views of life, circumstances and the nature of the universe vary considerably from one culture and time period to another. An understanding of the main biblical perspectives will greatly help our understanding and interpretation of the Bible.

Example: Imagine that you filled a time capsule with ten important items from the 21st century. If the time capsule was opened centuries later to reveal those items, would the people of the 28th century appreciate the exact importance of those items? Of course not! They would have to study the history, culture, philosophies and world-views of the 21st century in the west. We find ourselves in the same position when approaching the Bible.

3.2 Special Hermeneutics

3.2.1 Scripture as God's Story

The first thing to ultimately remember about Scripture is that it is *God's unfolding redemptive story or drama*.

It is NOT first and foremost:

- A how-to instruction manual
- A moral and ethics document
- A textbook to address for every matter under the sun

It is a story with a beginning, middle and end. It has characters that our personal God interacts with, and these characters walk out and tell us about God's revelation. It is a drama ultimately moving towards the good news goal of Jesus, the Messiah, and God's reign and glory filling the earth. And it is a story calling us to interact with the same revelation-bearing God in Jesus Christ.

It is that sort of adventure with the Bible that we are looking for, the adventure of starting at the Bible's words on paper only to find ourselves drawn into the story itself. We feel it, taste it, hear it, and come to know it with such perspective and depth that it renews us. That kind of renewal gives us courage to begin living it all over again in our world, but in a new way for a new day. This is the way of renewal. (Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*, Zondervan, 2008, p28)

3.2.2 Accommodation in Scripture

We have noted the varying challenges presented with regards to interpreting Scripture – language, history, geography, culture, philosophy and worldview. One important aspect of God's revelation has always been that he *accommodates* or *comes down* to our level, revealing himself '*incarnationally*'. This is exactly what happened in revealing The Truth, Jesus Christ.

Hence, when we read the Scripture, it comes to us through an ancient language, an ancient understanding of history, an ancient culture and philosophy and worldview. And if God were to reveal himself today (and he still does, though this does not mean we need add it to the canon of Scripture), then he would accommodate to our situations as well.

As theologian and author, Scot McKnight, reminds us:

God spoke in Moses' days in Moses' ways, and
God spoke in Job's days in Job's ways, and
God spoke in David's days in David's ways, and
God spoke in Solomon's days in Solomon's ways, and
God spoke in Jeremiah's days in Jeremiah's ways, and
God spoke in Jesus' days in Jesus' ways, and
God spoke in Paul's days in Paul's ways, and
God spoke in Peter's days in Peter's ways, and
God spoke in John's days in John's ways
and we are called to carry on that pattern in our world today. (Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*, Zondervan, 2008, p28)

McKnight continues:

The gospel is capable and designed to strike home in every culture, in every age, and in every language. Any idea of imposing a foreign culture, age, or language on another culture, age, and language quenches the dynamic power of the gospel and the Bible. We need not become Jews to live the gospel, nor need we become first- or fourth- or sixteenth- or eighteenth-century Christians...

What we most need is not a return to the first or fourth or sixteenth or eighteenth century but a fresh blowing of God's Spirit on our culture, in our day, and in our ways. We need twenty-first century Christians living out the biblical gospel in twenty-first century ways. Even more, if we read the Bible properly, we will see that God never asked one generation to step back in time and live the way it had done before. No, God spoke in each generation in that generation's ways. (p28-29)

3.2.3 Genres in Scripture

Though we must not forget the overall perspective that Scripture comes to us as a whole story, we must also note that, within that story, we are given varying types of literature, or genres of literature.

A. Theological Narrative History

We must also note that, not only is Scripture ultimately an *overarching* story-drama, but it also specifically consists of *narrative history* or *prose* (what we might call ordinary language, rather than poetic or metred language).

But we must also note that this narrative history comes to us with a *particular theological viewpoint*. The biblical authors have a point to make, as all historians do. One good definition of the *Bible's theological narrative history* is this:

A theological re-telling of history in the form of a narrative with the purpose of speaking into the present. (Mike Orsmund, Lecturer in Old Testament Studies, Trinity School of Ministry, UK)

Also, we must be mindful of not importing *modern* perspectives of history-writing into the *ancient* perspectives. There will be some similarities, but no doubt will exist differences.

B. Law

We can find examples of law, or commands, throughout Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments. But these words should not be fearfully viewed. One thing of importance to note is that the Hebrew word for 'law' is *torah*. This word specifically refers to *instruction*. God's Law, or laws-commands, are given as instruction on how to live within his unfolding redemptive structure.

With the Old Testament Law, found in places like Exodus to Deuteronomy, we, as new covenant Christians, must remember a few things:

- God's redeemed people of the Old Testament were a political entity-society as well. Thus, the people were given civil laws on how to conduct life in their community.

- It will do us well to read these laws knowing of their fulfilment in Jesus Christ.
- Our obedience to any of God's laws-commands does not bring us into relationship with God. Rather God establishes relationship and from there we are called to walk in obedience.

C. Poetry

When we think of poetry, we are mainly drawn to places like the Psalms. But poetry is actually scattered throughout the whole of Scripture.

The point is that poetry appeals more directly to the whole person than prose does. It stimulates our imaginations, arouses our emotions, feeds our intellects and addresses our wills. (Tremper Longman, *How To Read The Psalms*, IVP, 1988, p91-92)

The Hebrews had a special way of communicating poetry, through the means of *parallelism*. The general principle used in communicating through poetry was: *A, what's more B*. As we read the lines of the Hebrew poetry, normally the second phrase is related to the first phrase, but the second phrase always carries forward the thought of the first phrase.

We must also note that poetry will carry similes, metaphors, imagery, symbols, etc.

We see poetry, including song, used in the New Testament as well:

Luke 1:46-55; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 John 2:12-14

D. Proverb

Proverbs are actually a type of poetry. Particularly, a proverb is a practical insight into an area of life expressed in a brief, catchy saying. Modern proverbs might include:

- The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree
- Too many cooks spoil the broth

A proverb is not so much a guaranteed promise, but rather an insight about life in general.

E. Prophecy

In its most basic sense, biblical prophecy is about speaking forth (or writing) a message from God. But ancient Hebrew poetry is filled with many differing aspects:

- Poetic language
- Similes/Metaphors
- Visions
- Imagery
- Symbols

And so, we must be careful in 'literally' interpreting all words of prophecy, in a more wooden-literal sense. The prophetic words were literally meant. But we have to discern *how* they were literally meant.

It will also be helpful to note how items of nature are commonly used as imagery in prophetic literature.

- Mountains represent kingdoms
- Stars represent ruling powers
- Shifting in the heavenly bodies represent the ending of a power/order
- Roaring and troubled seas represent nations in turmoil
- Trees represent the higher grades of society
- Grass represent the lower grades of society
- Running streams represent the means of life and refreshment

Example: Isa 13:10 → What is this all about? Isa 13:1 tells us it is about judgment on Babylon.

Example: Acts 2:17-21 → What is this all about? Peter tells us that it will happen in the 'last days' and those days began 2000 years ago.

F. Parable

Parables are a particular type of story given to teach spiritual truth and provoke a response to that truth. This was one of Jesus' major teaching tools. If understood correctly, parables can leave a much stronger and lasting impression than a simple and straightforward statement.

With parabolic stories, we must remember that there is generally one main point and that each element does not necessarily represent something 'spiritual'. That is more in line with *allegory*. So, as with the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' (Luke 10:29-37), there is the great purpose of answering the question of *who is my neighbour*.

G. Epistle

We might better know this as a 'letter'. These are found mainly in the New Testament such as with Paul's specific letters to the varying churches (Ephesus, Galatia, etc) and people (Timothy, Titus) he worked with. Some letters were to be read aloud (1 Thess 5:27) and circulated (Col 4:16; 1 Pet 1:1). But, overall, the letters were written to a specific audience and addressed specific situations. Thus, it is possible that we must consider whether particular statements were given as once-for-all-time commands (such as with allowance of slavery, footwashing, head coverings, specific clothing, etc).

3.3 Introduction to Typology

3.3.1 Overview of Typology

Our pursuit of typology is mainly based on the prevalence of typological forms seen in Gen 1-11. And yet, typology is one of the more criticized types of hermeneutics. Partly because it has been so abused.

But because something has been abused, this does not make it invalid, and down through church history much has been written by exemplary and gifted theologians about the different 'types' found in the Bible, specifically in Genesis.

Historically, typology has been discussed since the earliest exegetists. Although they did not call it typology but instead referred to these verses as 'typical', Clement of

Alexandria and Origen discussed many of the verses of the Old Testament that we now refer to as typology or typological.

3.3.2 Definition of Typology

A 'type' could be defined as *an incomplete model of a person, place, or event that will come to fullness some time in the future*. A type could be identified as a preliminary work that serves as a plan or basis from which the final, more defined and full, product is to be made.

The automobile industry casts clay 'types' of cars, ones they are intending to produce at some point in the future. With these types, the automobile industry has a preview or working model of what the final car will look like. It's smaller, simpler, less well defined than the final project, but it gives the engineers a 'glimpse' of what the future car could look like.

That is why we say that types 'foreshadow' the fulfilment to come. When you see a shadow, you are naturally inquisitive concerning what person or object cast the shadow.

Some principles with regards to types:

Typology *models* a future reality rather than clearly *predicting* it.

Types are often closely allied with *symbols*, but the two are distinctive and divisible.

Adam and Melchizedek were *types* of Christ (Rom 5:14; Heb 7:1-9). The rainbow is a *symbol* of the covenant (Gen 9:13). A symbol represents; a type foreshadows. Types point to a future reality to come. Symbols point to something but do so as a *reminder* of something in the past, present or future.

Typology is different from *allegory*. A type models or points to one specific person, place or event. An allegory is a *extended metaphor in story-like form*.

Note: A metaphor compares two dissimilar things. A simile compares two dissimilar things using 'like' or 'as'.

In John 15:1, we find a metaphor. *'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser'*. In vs2-8, *'bearing fruit, branches, and fires'* are all metaphorical elements-statements combining to form an *allegorical story*.

In exegesis, an allegorical story has often been mistaken for a typological story and thus more has been implied into the allegory than was intended.

On the other hand, as many have mistaken a typological story for an allegory and have missed the fullness of the fulfilment of the type that came in the future.

Looking at the different ways of comparison in the Bible is very useful. There are generally considered six different ways of comparison as it relates to the Bible. They are: metaphor, allegory, symbol, simile, parable and type. When studying these six, it becomes apparent that they fit into two distinct groups of commonality.

Milton Terry (*Biblical Hermeneutics*) shows the commonality of 'simile, parable, and type on the one hand with metaphor, allegory, and symbol on the other'.

Intended Comparison	Example:	Formal Comparison	Example:
Metaphor		Simile	
Allegory		Parable	
Symbol		Type	
Language: intended		Language: literal	

3.3.3 Antitype

The *shadow* is called the *type*. What the shadow points to is called the *antitype*. Every type must have an antitype in order for it to exist as a type. Adam is the type; Jesus is the antitype.

‘*Anti*’ is a Greek prefix that can mean *opposite, against, or instead of*. But when we speak of antitypes as they relate to types, we are not referring to the opposite or something against the type. We are rather speaking of *the corresponding fulfilment to which the type pointed*.

The word ‘antitype’ is from the Greek word ‘antitupos’ which is used two times in the New Testament.

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy (antitupos) of the true one; he entered into heaven itself, now to appear for us in the presence of God. (Heb 9:24)

and this water symbolises (antitupos) baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 3:21)

In these verses, the *antitupos* denotes a meaning of ‘*on behalf of*’. Thus, with *antichrist* mentioned in 1 John, it is not only referring to someone who is *against* Christ (although that would certainly be the case here). But more closely it refers to anyone who seeks to ‘*take the place of*’ Christ.

3.3.4 Typology in the New Testament

The Greek word *tupos* is the word that we translate as *type*. *Tupos* is used 14 times in the New Testament: John 20:25 (marks), Acts 7:43 (images NASB, idols NIV), Acts 7:44 (pattern), Acts 23:25 (form, NASB), Rom 5:14 (pattern), Rom 6:17 (pattern), 1 Cor 10:6 (examples), Phil 3:17 (model), 1 Thess 1:7 (model), 2 Thess 3:9 (model), 1 Tim 4:12 (example), Tit 2:7 (example), Heb 8:5 (pattern), and 1 Pet 5:3 (examples).

One of the clearest examples of the word *type* used in the New Testament is found here:

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, who is a pattern (tupos) of the one to come. (Rom 5:14)

Tupos is one of many Greek words that refer to something in the Old Testament. The chart below lists the different words in Greek that refer to the Old Testament.

3.3.5 Principles of Interpreting Typology

In his classic work on types, Milton Terry lists his rules for determining types. These definitions are not as narrow as that of Bishop Marsh (who claims that unless the verse in the New Testament says that it is type, then it isn't) or as liberal as Augustine who viewed all types as allegories (as well as almost everything else).

And so this 'in-between' ground of Terry seems a safe place to draw tenets and principles of interpretation. The rules of this section, 3.3.5, are taken from his book *Biblical Hermeneutics*, first published in 1883.

In order for the person or event to be a type, it is essential that:

1. There must be some notable point of resemblance or analogy between the two. It is essential that there must also be some points of dissimilarity, otherwise we would have a copy and not a type. There might be singular similarity or there may be compound similarity, but there should not be universal similarity.
2. There must be evidence that the type was designed and appointed by God to represent the thing typified. In order for one thing to be a type of another, there must be more than mere resemblance.
3. The type must prefigure something in the future. It must be a shadow of things to come (Col 2:17 and Heb 10:1). It is not necessary, however, for the future antitype to have occurred yet (i.e., the flood being a type of the final judgment that has not yet come), in the same sense that a prophecy doesn't have to have fulfillment yet in order for it to be a prophecy.

Furthermore, the principal types of the Old Testament may be divided into 5 different classes.

- Typical Persons – Noah as a type of Christ
- Typical Institutions – Sabbath as a type of believers' eternal rest
- Typical Offices – Prophets as a type of Christ. Priests as a type of Christ.
- Typical Events – The flood as a type of the end of the age
- Typical Actions – Jonah three days and three nights in the belly of a whale as a type of burial and resurrection of Jesus.

4.0 Major Themes of Scripture

Noting that we have taken time to study the first 11 chapters of Genesis, as well as give a solid introduction to hermeneutics, we will now look at 6 particular themes that begin in Genesis and work their way through all of Scripture: kingdom of God, covenant, people, land, creation/new creation and Sabbath.

4.1 Kingdom of God

4.1.1 The Eternal Kingdom

Even before our *'in the beginning'* God was king (John 1:1-4). There was no other. And *'in the beginning'* of our part of the story, God was king. The will of heaven was done on earth.

But very quickly into the story, we see that others have looked to thwart the purposes and will of the king. Before humanity fell into sin, we see God's great mandate expressed in Gen 1:28. This was the original 'first command', even before God said don't eat of the fruit.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God was reigning as king over his creation. And now he expected his two image-bearers to carry on that rule, also making that rule known to their descendants.

But the enemy, the Satan, who had already rebelled against heaven was now focusing his attack on the great pinnacle of God's creation, human beings (Gen 3). And God, through his redemptive purposes for humanity and all of creation, has now purposed to make his rule known once again throughout all creation. This would be done through his Messiah-King, Jesus.

Notice this: what God does in sending the Son is to establish Jesus as the Messiah, which means King, and God established in Jesus Christ the kingdom of God, which means the King is ruling in his kingdom. We need to restate this: the idea of King and a kingdom are connected to the original creation. God wanted the Eikons, Adam and Eve, to rule in this world. They failed, so God sent his Son to rule. As its King and Messiah and Lord, the Son commissions the Church to bear witness to the world of the redemption in Jesus Christ, the true King, and to embody the kingdom as the people of God.' (Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel*, Zondervan, 2011, p35-36)

Let's look at a few passages in the Psalms:

The LORD is king for ever and ever. (Ps 10:16a)

*Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.
a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. (Ps 45:6)*

*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations. (Ps 145:13)*

It is verses like these that make us aware of God's universal and eternal rule from the beginning, even before creation. And it is passages like these that remind us that God is in charge, even in the midst of a sinful world. Thus, there truly has never been a time when God was not in charge. He is the eternal king!

And we can see his desire to fill the earth with his glory.

for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:9)

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Hab 2:14)

4.1.2 The Messianic Kingdom

Though God has always ruled over all of creation, he has still called and chosen a special people submitted to his kingdom rule. In the Old Testament, this great people began in Genesis with Abraham, they were called out of Egypt under Moses' leadership, and were, then, given the torah (law) by which they were to live. Yet, this would flesh itself out with the forming of the nation of Israel under the Davidic monarch. David, and each subsequent king, was to be an instrument through which God would rule over his beloved people, his treasured possession.

This was all to fulfil these words which God spoke at the foot of Mt Sinai:

4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites. (Ex 19:4-6)

Even so, in his day, David was the messiah (*mashiyach* in Hebrew), which simply means 'anointed one'. (The Greek for messiah/anointed one is *christos*; hence Jesus, the Christ). Thus, David was a type of Christ, foreshadowing the great Messiah-King that was to come that would rule over God's people, his treasured possession (see 1 Pet 2:4-10).

Therefore, God had chosen to express his rule through the Davidic king, of which Christ would be the ultimate fulfiller. David, as well as his successors, was to administrate justice and righteousness on behalf of the great king over all.

4.1.3 Defining Kingdom of God

Simply defined, God's kingdom is *his rule and reign*.

God's kingdom, His *malkuth* [Hebrew], is His universal rule, His sovereignty over all the earth. (George Ladd. *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, Paternoster, p20)

A *basileia* [Greek] may indeed be a realm over which a sovereign exercises his authority; and it may be the people who belong to that realm and over whom authority is exercised; but these are secondary and derived meanings. First of all, a kingdom is the authority to rule,

the sovereignty of the king. (George Ladd. *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, Paternoster, p19)

4.1.4 The Kingdom of God in Jesus

When we turn to the beginning of the Gospels, we see that Jesus arrives on the scene to begin His earthly ministry by announcing this:

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15)

The kingdom of God is referred to some 110 times in the Gospels, though not every instance is found on the lips of Jesus. Therefore, there is no doubt that the kingdom of God was a highly important topic to Jesus.

New Testament scholars generally agree that the burden of Jesus' message was the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15; Matt 4:17). (George Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, Eerdmans, p122)

We see the centrality of the kingdom to Jesus in passages like these:

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matt 4:17)

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. (Matt 4:23)

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matt 6:33)

But he [Jesus] said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." (Luke 4:43)

Jesus' priority was proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. It was good news to God's people that God had come to reign through his Messiah. Jesus proclaimed that God's favour had arrived and that the captives would be set free (Luke 4:18-21). Jesus ultimately showed God's rule-authority through his teaching and through his powerful acts of healing.

because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. (Matt 7:29)

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matt 12:28)

Some might ask why the kingdom of God doesn't seem greatly proclaimed in Acts and the Epistles. But God's kingdom is being proclaimed through the proclamation of Jesus. Consider these words of one theologian:

He who proclaimed the kingdom in his lifetime became the content of the proclamation among the early missionaries, and rightly so, because as the gospels make clear, it is through the agency of Jesus that men are brought

into the kingdom...The kingdom is inseparable from the King. (Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Eerdmans, 2004, p84)

4.1.5 Kingdom of God & Kingdom of Heaven

When reading the Gospels carefully, and considering the teachings of Jesus about the kingdom, one notices there are two main phrases used in regards to God's kingdom:

- Kingdom of God
- Kingdom of heaven (literally kingdom of the heavens)

Mark, Luke and John always speak of the 'kingdom of God', while Matthew speaks of both the 'kingdom of God' (12:28; 19:24; etc) and the 'kingdom of heaven' (3:2; 4:17; etc).

There are some who would look to distinguish between these two different phrases:

- **Kingdom of heaven** – refers to God's spiritual, celestial reign in the heavens, which is not closely related to His activity on earth
- **Kingdom of God** – refers to God's rule on the physical earth, usually tied in with Christ's return for a millennial, or 1000-year, reign.

Yet, if one studies the Jewish culture and theological mind-set of the day, one will see the two terms are actually *synonymous*.

Though maybe somewhat legalistic, the Jews of Jesus' day stayed away from using God's name in any sense in case they should break the commandment, '*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...*' (Ex 20:7). Thus, they used the word *Lord* (*Adonay* in Hebrew) or *The Name* (*Hashem* in Hebrew) to refer to God.

Also, when referring to the God's kingdom, they would many times speak of the 'kingdom of heaven', or as we said, 'kingdom of the heavens'.

The attempt to not speak God's name is known as *the divine passive*.

So, as we turn to the Gospels and note that Matthew's audience was mainly Jews, we then understand that he would regularly use the phrase 'kingdom of [the] heaven[s]' to avoid offending Jewish readers. The other Gospel writers, especially Mark and Luke, primarily had a Gentile audience. Thus, they would have used a phrase, 'kingdom of God', that would have been more accessible to Greek-speaking Gentile readers.

We see the connection between the two when we read these words from Matthew's own Gospel:

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Matt 19:23-24)

And as Ladd claims in this brief statement:

Apart from the reign of God, heaven is meaningless. (George Ladd. *The Gospel of The Kingdom*, Paternoster, p21)

In all, N.T. Wright sums it up well:

The reverent [expression] “kingdom of heaven”, so long misunderstood by some Christians to mean “a place, namely heaven, where saved souls go to live after death”, meant nothing of the sort in Jesus’ world: it was simply a Jewish way of talking about Israel’s [G]od becoming king. (*Jesus and the Victory of God*, Fortress Press, 1996, pp202-203)

4.1.6 Priority of the Kingdom

Some questions might arise when considering the relationship between the kingdom and the church:

- Are the kingdom of God and the church synonymous?
- Are they distinct from one another?
- Is one more important than the other?

It is Roman Catholic theology that has specifically identified the church with the kingdom of God, as espoused in works like Augustine’s *City of God*, Book 20, chapter 9.

Yet, there are four major teachings of Scripture that underscore the priority of the kingdom over the church.

A. The Kingdom Was First

As we saw back in section 4.1.1, God has been king from the beginning and his kingdom rule is eternal.

The LORD is king for ever and ever. (Ps 10:16a)

*Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.
a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. (Ps 45:6)*

*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations. (Ps 145:13)*

There has never been a time when God was not King and there was never a time when He did not rule. But, in contrast, there was a time when the church, God’s *ekklesia*, did not exist. Thus, if God’s kingdom is eternal, but the church is not, then we find the church utterly dependent upon the king and his rule.

The Kingdom is primarily the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God, and derivatively, the sphere in which the rule is experienced. In biblical idiom, the Kingdom is not identified with its subjects. They are the people of God’s rule who enter it, live under it, and are governed by it. The church is the community of the Kingdom but never the Kingdom itself. Jesus’ disciples belong to the Kingdom as the Kingdom belongs to them; but they are not the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the rule of God; the church is a society of women and men. (George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Lutterworth, 1994, p109)

Even if one wants to equate the physical nation of Israel with the kingdom of God, there was also a time when the Hebrew people did not exist. But, again, there was never a time when the kingdom of God did not exist. God has always been king!

B. The Gospel of the Kingdom

It is interesting to note that Jesus came proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, not the gospel of the church.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. (Matt 4:23)

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. (Matt 9:35)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:14)

But he [Jesus] said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." (Luke 4:43)

C. Prayer for the Kingdom to Come

Jesus taught us to pray for the kingdom rule of God to come on earth as it is in heaven, not for the church to come.

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:10)

E. Stanley Jones made this powerful statement:

The Christian Church, while it holds within itself the best life of the Kingdom, is not the kingdom of God. The Kingdom is absolute, the Church is relative – relative to something beyond itself, the Kingdom. The Kingdom judges and redeems the Church, and the Church is potent to the degree that it obeys the Kingdom and embodies the life and spirit of the Kingdom. The Church is not an end in itself, the Kingdom is the end. Jesus never said, "May thy church come on earth as it is in heaven." He did say, "Thy kingdom come..., on earth." (Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*. McNett Press, 1995, p35)

D. We Are to Seek the Kingdom

Finally, Jesus declared that his followers were to seek the kingdom and its righteousness, not the church.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matt 6:33)

As Jones goes on to state:

So let not our cry be, "Save the Church," but "Seek the Kingdom," seek the Kingdom, first, last, and always, and "all these things will be added unto you," including the Church, redeemed and reoriented and single-pointed – the

Kingdom. If the Church should perish the Kingdom would remain. (E. Stanley Jones, *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*. McNett Press, 1995, p37)

God ruled from the beginning. Though his rule was abrogated by both Satan and humanity, he stayed the course of seeing his good rule extended in all the earth. And this has been ultimately initiated in his Son, Jesus, God's true Messiah-King. We only await the final chapter when all things are made right, sin is dealt with, the heavens and earth are renewed, and we enjoy our Father's God presence for all eternity.

4.2 Covenant

4.2.1 Defining Covenant

A. Relationship

It can be quite difficult to define the word *covenant*, at least biblically, as it is not clearly defined in Scripture, nor do we have an English word that is adequately equivalent. The word *covenant* comes from the Hebrew word *berit*. It occurs some 290 times in Scripture. We might define it as '*agreement*', '*contract*' or '*special arrangement*', and there are many other words we could try and use to define covenant. Below are two people's definitions of covenant:

A covenant is a bond in blood, or a bond of life and death, sovereignly administered. (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p4)

Theologically, I define 'covenant' as a gracious relationship of love between God and humanity, a relationship in which God takes the initiative by creating the world to be the place where it [the covenant relationship] can be realised, then creating human beings to live in it. He binds us to himself, giving us the right and responsibility to live in his love and to serve and glorify him in gratitude. (Adrio Konig, *The Eclipse of Christ in Eschatology: Toward a Christ Centred Approach*, Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1989, p55)

For our study, we will simply define 'covenant' as *a binding relationship*. In this God-relationship, God states that he is *joining himself*, or *uniting himself*, to those who are in relationship with him.

One of the foundations of the covenant relationship is the Hebrew word *chesed*. This word is translated as *kindness*, *unfailing love* or other such similar words. But the 'hesed of God' would be better understood when translated as '*covenant love*'. This love is based upon the commitment of God to love his people. God's love is not ultimately based upon feeling. Oh, God has feelings for us and he expresses those feelings to us. But when it comes to push and shove, God's covenant love is based upon a sole commitment to love his people. The Greek word with a similar meaning would be *agape*.

Biblically, the heart of the covenant relationship between God and man is this: '*I will be your God, and you will be my people.*'

Gen 17:7
Ex 29:45

Deut 29:13
Jer 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38

Or we could say that, in the full reality of the new covenant, the heart of the covenant relationship is this: *'I will be your Father, and you will be my children.'*

Rom 8:14-17
Eph 1:5-6
2 Cor 6:17-18

We can also note that covenant is not restricted to God and humanity. It is also used in connection with one person and another, or even one nation and another as in the Old Testament. Such examples can be found in:

Josh 9:3-15 – Israel and the Gibeonites
1 Sam 18:3 – David and Jonathan
2 Sam 3:12-21 – David and Abner
2 Kgs 11:17 – Jehoiada the priest and king Joash of Judah

The greatest example of people-covenant is the marriage relationship between man and woman, which is to mirror the relationship between God and His people.

Gen 2:24
Eph 5:22-31

B. A Blood-Binding Relationship

The covenant bond is essentially one that was established in blood. The Hebrew expression usually translated 'to make a covenant' would be literally translated as *'to cut a covenant'*. We are introduced to this idea in Gen 15 as God appears to Abraham (his name at that time) in a vision. The cutting refers to the presence of blood at the covenant's inauguration.

Robertson points out the importance of blood in the covenant bond:

Once the covenant relationship has been entered, nothing less than the shedding of blood may relieve the obligations incurred in the event of covenantal violation. (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p11)

This is ultimately why God's Son had to shed his own blood on the cross. He took on our penalty for violating covenant with God.

Three reasons why blood is important in the covenant relationship:

1. It represents life (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:11), and thus its pouring out is the giving of life.
2. It points to the need for forgiveness (Matt 26:28; Heb 9:22).
3. It points to the curse(s) that will fall upon the violator of covenant (Jer 34:18; Gal 3:13).

Though covenant is usually established in blood, we do find two of the major covenants where blood is not shed in the relationship:

- **Creation:** At this point there was no need for blood to be shed because sin had not entered the scene.

- **David:** This is probably a continuing extension of that which we see with Abraham and Moses. Thus, blood was still connected to those 2 previous covenants. Also, God made a promise, or a pledge, to David and his promises cannot be broken (see 2 Sam 7:28).

C. A Relationship Initiated by God

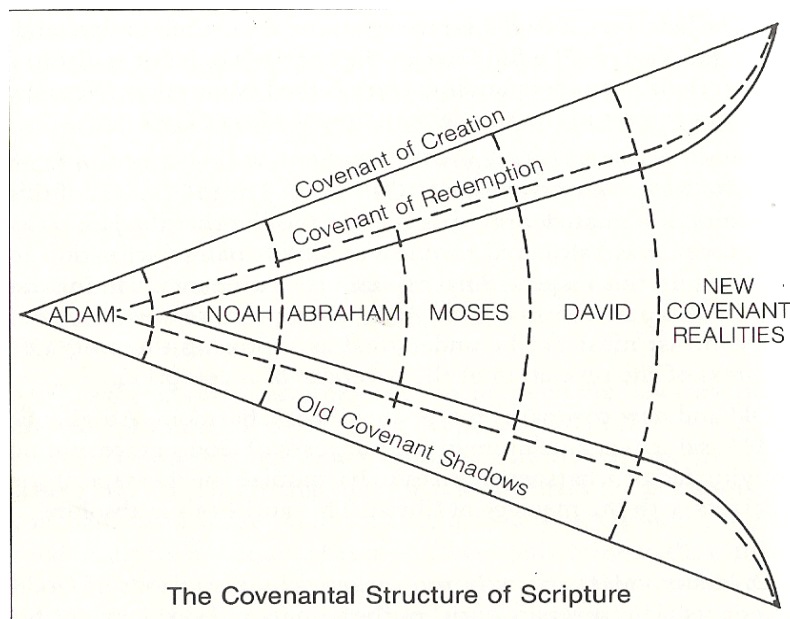
Biblically, God graciously initiates the establishment of his covenant with humanity. Remember, it was the LORD who passed between the pieces of the animals in Gen 15:17. It was God's Son who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross (Heb 12:2),

4.2.2 Covenant Signs

In Scripture, most of the covenants are spoken of having a sign, which are pointers to the covenant relationship that exists between God and people. We all know that the sign of the covenant with Noah was the 'bow in the cloud'. But the Scripture does not always clearly state the signs of the different covenants. Though we do not read about a sign in the creation covenant, or the redemptive covenant with Adam, they are actually there. As we study these different covenant relationships, we will look to see what signs God gave with each one.

A Picture Explaining the Major Covenants of Scripture

This chart is taken from Robertson's *The Christ of the Covenants*, p62.



4.2.3 Seven Major Covenants

A. Creation Covenant

In our reading of Scripture, we may note that the first time the word *covenant* appears is in the account of Noah (see Gen 6:18). So the question has always

arisen: 'Did God establish a covenant relationship prior to his relationship with Noah?'

When we read the account of God's covenant promises with David (2 Sam 7; 1 Chron 17), though the word does not appear, God's commitment to David was of a covenantal nature as he committed to fulfilling his word (see 2 Sam 7:28-29). Also, other Scripture points to God's relationship with David as being of a covenantal nature. David was to later pray:

2 Sam 23:5
Ps 89:3-4

Therefore, if such a bond existed between God and David, could not a covenantal relationship have existed in God's relationship with humanity, as well as creation, prior to his relationship with Noah?

Messianic prophecies appear in Scripture long before the term "messiah" occurs. The realities of the kingdom of God on earth manifest themselves thousands of years before the terms "king" and "kingdom" appear in Scripture to designate God's relationship to his creation. (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p25)

'If all the ingredients essential to the making of a covenant were present prior to Noah, the relationship of God to man prior to Noah may be designated as "covenantal".' (Robertson p18-19)

Also, noting God's nature can help us consider covenant relationships before Noah. Remember, God is a covenant God, he has a covenant name (Yahweh) and he is covenantally committed to his purposes and his people.

Any theology of covenant must begin with Genesis 1:1. (William Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*, Paternoster, 2002, p42)

As we noted, we do not specifically read about a sign that God gave with the creation covenant. So is there one? Remember that we do not find the word *covenant* in the first two chapters of Genesis, yet we now see that such a relationship existed. The same stands true for the sign of the creation covenant. We do not see one specifically mentioned, but it is there.

So what was the sign? When Adam and Eve woke up each morning, they were looking at it. When they went to sleep each evening, they were looking at it. God had given them the whole of creation as a gift, as a sign of the relationship that existed between Father and children. Creation was ultimately God's, but he lavished his grace on his representatives from the beginning by entrusting them to rule over, work and care for the earth.

B. Adamic-Redemptive Covenant

Due to humanity's failure under the covenant from the beginning, God introduced to his covenant of redemption. Remember, this was not 'Plan B', but rather the introduction of redemption so that his same good purposes might continue on.

The New Testament era is commonly referred to as the 'age of grace', and it is a correct statement, for the greatest revelation of grace came in Christ (John 1:16-17). Yet, we can also see God's grace has always been evident right throughout Scripture. We have even seen this is the Fall account of Gen 3. God could have abandoned, started over, etc. But he sought after our first parents and began his gracious redemptive plan in Jesus Christ.

Again, we do not specifically read in the text about a sign that God gave to humanity after the Fall, but it is there, and actually, there are three signs. The first was the seed. Adam and Eve were looking for the descendant that would rise up and crush the serpent. Every time a new child was born, a new descendant-seed was born, they looked upon such with hope.

Not only were they looking out for the promised blessing of the seed, they also had the sign of the serpent. Every time they saw a serpent, it was a sign to them that the enemy would be defeated. God had declared war on Satan and God would hold true to His promise to crush the serpent's head.

After God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden, he stationed the cherubim and flaming sword (Gen 3:24). Many theologians see this sign as a protective measure for Adam and Eve keeping our fallen parents from eating from the tree of life and remaining in such a state.

C. Noahic Covenant

We already established how God established a relationship of grace first and foremost with Noah. See the notes in section 2.4 for more.

One of the aspects seen in God's covenant with Noah is his intention to deal with families through the covenant relationship.

Gen 6:18

1 Cor 7:12-14 – Paul addresses this issue here

As a matter of fact, the theme of the family of Noah is repeated many times throughout the narrative account:

Gen 7:1, 7, 13; 8:16, 18; 9:1, 8, 9

The covenant is now seen explicitly to involve Noah's seed (9:9). That is to say, the implications contained in the salvation of the eight are now made clear. What is also now clear is that the covenant referred to in 6:18 was not with Noah personally but with Noah representatively. The covenant referred to is designed to provide for the future of the human race and is therefore universal in its scope. (William Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*, Paternoster, 2002, p27)

What Dumbrell is pointing out is that God has chosen not only to save Noah, but his family as well, that a seed might be preserved through which the great promised seed of Gen 3:15 might come.

After the flood, God established his covenant not only with Noah and his family, but with all of creation as well:

Gen 9:8-10, 13

God re-establishes the covenant relationship with creation, and as thus, creation would continue to declare the glory of God just as it had from the beginning.

Ps 19:1-4

Paul clearly expresses the universality of God's redemptive covenant with the whole of creation, expressing his heart to not only redeem humanity, but also all of creation:

Rom 8:20-22

Later in the Mosaic covenant, God would even give specific guidelines for the treatment of the animal creation. Even the 'cattle' were to be given a Sabbath-rest (Ex 20:10). If God was so interested in a covenant relationship with His earth (seen from the beginning and with Noah), then we should also look to be good stewards and take care of this great planet God has given to us (see Ps 8:3-8).

God, in his judgment, had just destroyed all but eight people and the animals aboard the ark. It might be assumed that God would do the same if mankind again became wicked. Or, even worse, God might destroy humanity completely.

To relieve these understandable fears, God established the covenant with Noah, with his family and with all of creation, making an oath to never destroy the earth in this way again.

Gen 9:11

God realises that, ultimately, the sin problem can never be cured through *judgment*. It can only be cured through *redemption*. However, in the days of Noah, God gave a model for the final judgment: all the wickedness of the world will be judged. Then, after that final judgment, we find the bride of Christ (the new Jerusalem) in Rev 21 inheriting '*a new heaven and a new earth*' just as Noah had done in his day.

Obviously, the sign of the covenant was the rainbow in the clouds (Gen 9:12-15).

D. Abrahamic Covenant

Josh 24:2 tells us that Abraham and his family were worshipping other gods at the time God called him. We get even more insight into the calling of Abraham as we read Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin:

Acts 7:2-4

The great redemptive promise given to Abraham can be found in these first words of the LORD to him:

Gen 12:1-3

Here we find the first stage of the relationship between God and Abraham – the call. God had selected a new man and blessed him in order that he might become a blessing to all families on earth. In Gal 3:8, Paul declares that the promise of 12:3 – '*in you all the families of the earth will be blessed*' – was a preaching of the good news. If Gen 3:15 is the 'first gospel', we could call Gen 12:3 the 'second gospel'. The goal of this promise is world-redemption and Christ is the greater seed of Abraham through which the whole world finds its redemptive blessing.

The second stage of God's covenant with Abraham – in Gen 15 – concerned the granting to him of a) offspring and b) land. God had already promised Abraham numerous offspring and the land of Canaan in Gen 13:14-18. But it is in Gen 15 that we read of the formal confirmation of the covenant promise.

1. Son & People

Gen 15:1-6

In this 'second stage' of the covenant relationship, God then spells out the 'great reward' by promising that Abraham would be given a son from his own body to be heir, and ultimately, he would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.

In ancient near eastern culture this was 'music to Abraham's ears'. After these promises were spoken to Abraham, he then responds in faith, believing God. This whole underlying point on faith leading to righteousness is developed strongly in both Galatians and Romans.

It took a full 25 years between promise and fulfilment, something that should give us great courage in regards to remaining patiently hope-ful and faith-ful with God's promises.

Though Abraham was given the promised son, Isaac, but he did not live to see his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. This promise was initially fulfilled with the Hebrews that lived in Egypt prior to the great Exodus.

Ex 1:6-7

But ultimately, Jesus Christ is the great seed of Abraham and it is in him that all the promises of God are ultimately fulfilled:

Gal 3:16-19
2 Cor 1:20

Still, all those who belong to Christ by faith are descendants of Abraham, the '*father of all who believe*', whether Jew or Gentile:

Rom 4:11
Gal 3:7, 29

2. Land

Just before the elaborate covenant-cutting ceremony, the LORD promises land to Abraham himself (15:7), while as part of the ceremony, he promises it to his descendants (15:18). This referred to the land of Canaan, and because God promised it to Abraham and his descendants, it thus became known as the *promised land*.

The promise of the land would initially be fulfilled 400 years later as the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River and began to take the land of Canaan. As so many things in the Old Testament foreshadow a greater fulfilment, so does the promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

Again, in one sense, Christ is the great promised land that believers, both Jew and Gentile, receive. This is not 'spiritualising' anything, but rather seeing Christ as the great fulfilment of all God's promises (i.e. 2 Cor 1:20). Or, we could say we are spiritualising this, but something spiritual means it is 'of God's Spirit', just like something 'heavenly' is 'of the kingdom of God/heaven'. So this is a good and right purpose of God, not just a floaty-ethereal promise.

To flesh this out, the true descendants of Abraham, those who are in Christ, are now promised a renewed heaven and earth

Matt 5:5 – quoting Ps 37:11

Rev 21:1-3 – it is the Bride who comes to possess the new heavens and new earth

There are some who hold that the land of Palestine/Israel belongs to the Jews. Wars are even started over this argument. But God has something greater to give his people of faith. Consider these words below:

Imagine a father who, in the days before mechanized transport, promises his son, aged 5, that when he is 21 he will give him a horse for himself. Meanwhile the motor car is invented. So on his 21st birthday the son awakes to find a motor car outside, "with love from Dad". It would be a strange son who would accuse his father of breaking his promise just because there was no horse. And even stranger if, in spite of having received the far superior motor car, the son insisted that the promise would only be fulfilled if a horse also materialized, since that was the literal promise. It is obvious that with the change in circumstances, unknown at the time the promise was made, the father has more than kept his promise. In fact he has done so in a way that surpasses the original words of the promise which were necessarily limited by the mode of transport available at the time. The promise was made in terms understood at the time. It was fulfilled in the light of new historical events. (Christopher Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, IVP, 1992, p71).

The new covenant in Christ was '*established on better promises*' (Heb 8:6). Our Father now wants to give us the whole earth.

3. Circumcision

The covenant sign given to Abraham is that he and every male in his household must be circumcised (17:9-14, 23-27). Ishmael had been begotten by confidence in the flesh. Therefore, with circumcision, God was declaring to Abraham that Isaac was to be a son of promise, not of flesh. Isaac will be the product of a man who has had 'flesh' removed from his reproductive organ. From that point forward, as the flesh was cut away on the eighth day from each male born, it was a sign that this child was a son of promise, not a son of the flesh.

Note what Paul says:

Rom 9:6-9

The covenant with Abraham is declared to be everlasting (17:7, 13, 19). This is because the whole of that covenant would be renewed and made permanent in Christ and the new covenant (notice 'everlasting' in Is 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Ezk 16:60; 37:26 as these prophets foretell the day of a new covenant).

This circumcision of the foreskin was to signify a greater circumcision that had taken place: one of the heart (see Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:25-26; Rom 4:11-12). Circumcision of the heart speaks of a new creation. Paul addresses many times what circumcision is really about and how one is truly a 'descendant of Abraham':

Rom 2:28-29
Col 2:11
Gal 6:15-16

So, we must see all things in the Abrahamic covenant as foreshadowing something greater of which God wanted to accomplish with His people:

- Abraham's descendants – those of faith with a circumcised heart
- The promised land – the new heaven and new earth in the age to come
- Circumcision – a circumcised heart which speaks of a new creation

E. Mosaic Covenant

1. The Ten Commandments

Ex 20:1-17

When we think of 'the Law', we specifically think of the Ten Commandments. But there were actually a total of 613 commandments in the Pentateuch – 365 do not's and 248 do's.

The Ten Commandments were actually given three times:

- Orally (Ex 20:1-17): The Ten Commandments are also referred to as the 'Ten Words', 'Ten Utterances', or 'Decalogue'.
- Written on two tablets of stone *'inscribed by the finger of God'* (Ex 31:18): They were smashed after the incident with the golden calf (Ex 32:15-16, 19)
- The broken tablets were replaced with another pair of stone tablets (Ex 34:1-4): These were placed inside the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:16; 40:20; Heb 9:4)

When Jesus was asked which is the greatest commandment in the Law (Matt 22:36-40), He gave two that were not even spoken as part of the original Ten Commandments. These two commandments actually summed up the ten:

- You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matt 22:37 quoting Deut 6:5).
- You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matt 22:39 quoting Lev 19:18).

The first four commandments express practical aspects of love to the sovereign God. No one who loves God will want to:

- Serve any other god
- Set any creature above its Creator
- Devalue His name
- Deprive Him of time, worship and service (in the OT context)

The final six commandments deal with specific features of love for one's fellow man created in God's image. No one who loves his neighbour will wish to:

- Dishonour their parents, or any God-given authority
- Take his life
- Take his wife
- Take his possessions
- Bear false witness against his neighbour
- Selfishly desire anything of his

Love was the total response of the whole person to God who had brought the people out of Egyptian slavery and through the Red Sea. That love was then to be expressed in their relationships amongst one another.

2. The Law as a Step Forward in God's Redemptive Plan

There is a difficulty that usually arises in discussing the Law. It seems as if God took a step backwards in his plan of redemption when he gave the Law to Moses and Israel. He had credited righteousness to Abraham by faith (Gen 15:6), and it now appears that he is crediting righteousness according to obedience to law.

The questions might arise: 'Why did God send the Law in the first place? Why didn't God just send Christ after the Exodus?'

- When Jesus began his ministry, he said, 'This time has come,' or 'The time is fulfilled.' (Mark 1:15)
- Paul says that Christ came at the 'fullness of time' or 'set time'. (Gal 4:4)

We must keep in mind that God was slowly unfolding his redemptive purposes from Adam's Fall right up until the time of Christ. God had revealed to Abraham that righteousness came by believing God. And now God was giving his people specific instructions (*torah*) to live by. The Law also functions in the unique role of making us aware of the need for a Saviour. Without the Law, we miss a very vital function of Jesus as Saviour-Deliverer of humanity from its sinfulness.

Look up the following verses to see what Paul teaches us about the purpose of the Law and justification by faith in Christ:

Rom 3:20	Gal 3:11
Rom 3:28	Gal 3:19-22
Rom 7:7	Gal 3:24
Gal 2:16	

God first redeemed Israel before he ever gave them the Law at Mount Sinai. God first brought them out of Egypt, then he gave the instructions for living. Thus, we find the grace and redemptive relationship as primary, not Law. Israel was now to respond with love.

The sign of this covenant was that of the stone tablets that pointed to the Torah-Law that God had given his people, now to be placed inside the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:16; 40:20; Heb 9:4). The Sabbath also served as a sign (Ex 31:13, 17).

F. Davidic Covenant

1. Introductory Thoughts

2 Sam 7:1-17

As we talked about previously in our notes, the word 'covenant' does not appear in original context of 2 Sam 7. But we know that God's commitment to David was of a covenantal nature. The following Scripture passages do highlight the covenant between Yahweh and David:

2 Sam 7:28-29

2 Sam 23:5

Ps 89:3-4

David had wanted to build a permanent central sanctuary (temple) for the LORD but was forbidden as a man of war and bloodshed (1 Chr 22:8). This might be a reference not to fighting of the LORD'S battles, but to most of his bloody massacres while taking refuge from Saul in the land of the Philistines (see 1 Sam 27, esp. v9). The privilege would therefore be given to his son Solomon, the next in a perpetual royal, messianic lineage.

In the covenant, God promised David:

- **A great name** – authority (2 Sam 7:9; similar to Abraham in Gen 12:2)
- **A place for Israel** – territory (2 Sam 7:10; promised to Abraham in Gen 17:8; promised to Moses and Israel in Ex 6:8)
- **Continued rest from enemies** – prosperity (2 Sam 7:11; relating back to life in Eden and the 'new earth' under Noah)
- **A permanent house and dynasty** – progeny (2 Sam 7:12-16)
- **A father/son relationship with his descendant kings** – intimacy (2 Sam 7:14-15; Israel had this special relationship with God – Ex 4:22)

2. Continuity with Previous Covenants

The Davidic covenant was not a new and stand-alone act of God. Based upon the five 'bullet points' above, we can see the simple connections of the Davidic covenant with the previous covenant relationships of the Old Testament. We can also see its relation to the previous covenants through the two points below:

- **Adamic covenant:** David was the 'messianic' (anointed) king and a man '*after [God's] own heart*' (1 Sam 13:14). Thus, in one sense, we have a connection to the promised seed of the woman (Gen 3:15).
- **Mosaic covenant:** We can see the importance placed on obeying the commands of the LORD (7:14). Also, the covenant book of Deuteronomy speaks of the coming of the monarchy and had warned, along with a few other things, that the king should be one '*the LORD your God chooses*' (Deut 17:14-17). Deuteronomy had also required the eventual king to provide himself with a personal copy of 'this law' and keep it near for daily reference (Deut 17:18-20). So, this covenant between the LORD and David had been anticipated in the Mosaic covenant.

3. Fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant

In the prophetic words spoken through Nathan, there are two special features we will specifically look at and how they were fulfilled:

- God would establish the throne of his kingdom forever (1 Sam 7:12-13)
- His son would build a house for Yahweh's name (1 Sam 7:13)

a. The Throne/Kingdom

In this covenant, God tells David that his descendant after him would be raised up and *'I will establish his kingdom'* (2 Sam 7:12-13). This was initially fulfilled as Solomon, David's son and descendant, received the kingdom from his father (1 Kgs 2:1-4).

Yet as the story of 1 & 2 Kings unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that the descendants of David are not walking in the ways of Yahweh. After the reign of Solomon the kingdom was divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah and by 586 BC both nations had been swept away into captivity, a result of the judgment of God for their unfaithfulness to His covenant. The eternal establishment of David's throne still lacked fulfillment.

Here, once again, Old Testament types and shadows point to greater things to come in Jesus Christ and the new covenant. Ezekiel prophesied that one day, *'my servant David will be prince among them'* (Ezk 34:24) and, *'My servant David will be king over them'* (Ezk 37:24). More and more, the Jews began to look with eager expectation for the coming Messiah, the Anointed One. Not only would He rule over the land of Israel, but *'his rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the River [Euphrates] to the ends of the earth'* (Zech 9:9-10).

At the great Pentecost of Acts 2, we read this:

Acts 2:29-36

Peter proclaimed that because David was a prophet, he knew that when God swore to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he was to look ahead to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:30-31). Therefore, when Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33), he was seated on the greater throne of David. Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18), and he is now *'far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come'* (Eph 1:20-23; see also 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13). Thus, he is able to establish the kingdom of God from 'sea to sea' (Zech 9:10).

b. The House

God also promises that David's descendant would *'build a house for my Name'* (2 Sam 7:13). Again, initially Solomon fulfilled this promise as he built the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 6). But there was a greater descendant of David who was to build a greater house for the name of the LORD.

As King of kings, seated on David's greater throne at the right hand of the Father, Jesus is building a house for the LORD.

God has always desired a place, a temple, in which he could dwell. First, there was the tabernacle constructed after the Exodus. Then there was the temple built by Solomon where the glory of the LORD was to dwell.

Today, God is building yet an even more glorious temple. But in the New Testament, we see the emphasis that *'the Most High does not live in houses made by human*

hands' (Acts 7:48, see also Acts 17:24). The glorious temple Jesus is now constructing is that of the body of Christ.

Eph 2:19-22
1 Pet 2:4-5

Concerning the prophetic visions of Ezekiel, God did promise that a new and beautiful temple would be rebuilt (see Ezk 40-48). Of course, this was initially fulfilled in the days of Zerubbabel (see Ezra 3, 5-6). But some argue that Ezra's temple was not as glorious as described by Ezekiel, thus we are waiting for that temple to be built in the future. But the truth is that God has kept his promise to fulfil the words prophesied by Ezekiel.

Again, remember these all-important words of Paul

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Cor 1:20)

c. The Sign of the Covenant

The sign of the covenant given to David would be the throne on which he and his descendants sat. David's dynasty lasted for 400 years until the exile. But four centuries is not forever. Christ was born of David's line (Matt 1:1-17) and seated on David's greater throne. Thus, the truth that Christ reigns on the kingly throne of heaven is now a perpetual reminder that God has kept his word to David. The heavenly nature of Christ's throne also points to the fact that he does not rule over just one nation of the earth (Israel), but all nations.

F. New Covenant

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he held a Passover meal for his closest followers. During that meal, he instituted the 'new covenant' in his blood:

Luke 22:20
Heb 9:15

When Jesus arrived on the scene at the '*fullness of time*' (Gal 4:4), He came as the second Adam, rest-giving Noah, son of Abraham, son of David, son of Man, and Son of God.

1. Christ's Fulfilment of All Previous Covenants

Christ fulfilled and completed all the previous covenants outlined in the Old Testament. Christ was the great seed of the woman that would crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:15; Col 2:15). Christ was the great Noah rest-giver (Gen 5:29; Matt 11:28). Christ was the great seed of Abraham that was to come (Gal 3:16) and he came to fulfil and complete the law (Matt 5:17). Finally, he was David's descendant who was to be seated on the throne of his kingdom (Acts 2:29-36), all the while building a house for the LORD (1 Pet 2:4-5).

'By his death, once and for all, Christ's work as fulfiller of law and prophets was finished forever. By his resurrection in the power of an endless life, the covenant of life was ushered in. These events have an infinite significance in revealing the character of the covenants they are related to. The death of

Christ shows the true nature of the old Covenant. It is elsewhere called “a ministration of death” (2 Corinthians 3:7). It brought nothing but death. It ended in death. Only by death could the life that had been lived under it be brought to an end. The new was to be a covenant of life. It had its birth in the omnipotent resurrection power that brought Christ from the dead.’ (Andrew Murray, *Covenants and Blessings: Discover Your Rights as a Believer*, Whitaker, p61).

As the writer to the Hebrews put it, this new covenant is truly a better covenant:

Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.
(Heb 7:22)

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. (Heb 8:6)

2. Christ's Fulfilment of Old Testament Types

As Christ fulfilled each of the covenants, he also fulfilled all the types in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ is:

- The great seed that would crush Satan's head (Col 2:15)
- The greater seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16)
- The greater sacrifice for the day of atonement (Heb 9:13-15)
- The greater Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7)
- The greater High Priest (Heb 7:23-27)
- The greater Sabbath rest (Matt 11:28-30; Col 2:16-17; Heb 4:9-10)
- The greater temple indwelt by God's glory (John 2:19)
- The greater Son of David (Matt 1:1; Acts 13:22-23; Rom 1:3)
- The greater King (Matt 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20-23)
- Seated on the greater throne of David (Acts 2:29-36)
- A guarantee of a better covenant (Heb 9:22)

3. Our Participation in Christ

As those who are in Christ, and part of his body, we are called to participate in all that Christ has done (see Heb 3:14):

- Crush Satan under our feet (Rom 16:20)
- Abraham's descendants (Rom 4:11)
- Become living sacrifices (Rom 12:1-2)
- Part of a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9)
- Enter God's Sabbath rest (Heb 4:9-10)
- Become the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19-22)
- Become sons and daughters of God (Rom 8:14; Gal 3:26)
- Seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6)
- Participate in the new covenant (Heb 9:14-15)

4. Signs of the Covenant

The two signs of the new covenant:

- **Communion** (1 Cor 11:24-26) – participating in Christ’s death as we share this meal together as the covenant community.
- **Water baptism** (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12) – not just a symbol, but a means of God’s grace wherein we participate in the death of Christ.

4.3 The Sabbath

4.3.1 Sabbath in the Old Testament

In the opening chapters of Genesis, we read that God set a pattern for humanity by resting Himself on the seventh day:

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Gen 2:1-3)

Though God is the all-sufficient Creator and He would never truly need rest (see Ps 121), he chose to set a pattern for the human race.

Later on, after being led out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt, God would command the Israelites about Sabbath rest. This is found in what we refer to as the Ten Commandments:

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. (Ex 20:8-10)

Later on, God reconfirms this command:

1 Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, “These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do: 2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day.” (Ex 35:1-3)

This was obviously important for God and he expected it to be dear to the hearts of his people, even to the point of a command being given that people must be put to death if they broke the Sabbath.

We see the set aside time of the Sabbath rest as pointing to:

- **Trust in God** – to provide for the full seven days when only working six days.
- **Relationship with God** – serving and walking with Him while not becoming enslaved to creation.

Though we could pick any number of other Old Testament passages to consider, we can consider Isa 56:2 to, once again, hear God’s desire that Israel continue to follow the pattern of His own rest:

Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”

This sounds pretty serious, as it did in Ex 35:2! God equates not keeping the Sabbath with doing evil.

4.3.2 Sabbath in the New Testament

Yet, as with any biblical teaching, if we stopped with the Old Testament, we would not have a fully developed theology concerning the Sabbath. We need the *end* of the story – the New Testament. So, moving into the New Testament, and stopping specifically in the Gospels to begin with, we read statements like these from the lips of Jesus:

How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” (Matt 12:12)

27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27-28)

In his defence Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” (John 5:17)

In the passage above, from John’s Gospel, we get the idea that maybe God isn’t literally ‘resting’ every seventh day. And it isn’t that he is looking to break his own commands, but it is the fact that something bigger was meant by the pattern set in the beginning.

In regards to the Sabbath rest, what many Christians can try and do is unequivocally live by the teachings of the Old Testament Law with no input from the Christ and the new covenant. So, with noble heart, you might hear many say, ‘*Remember the Sabbath, keep it holy.*’ And what this statement usually means is, ‘*Go to church on Sunday and don’t work on Sunday.*’

As a side note, one cannot go to church when we recognise that the church (*ekklesia*) is ultimately about the people of God, since Christ gave his life for a people and bride, not a building.

But, in the attempt to obediently walk out the Law, what many do not realise is that the statement and action of ‘*going to church and not working on Sunday*’ is not an actual fulfilment of *the Law’s prescription of the Sabbath*. For, if one really wanted to get down to obeying the detail of the Law in regards to the Sabbath, they would have to *avoid working from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown*, not to mention that they would need to gather together on Saturday as a local church. That is how the Old Testament Law of Sabbath would have been understood.

Yet, there are some today who understand that the Old Testament Sabbath was Friday sundown to Saturday sundown and, so, they get very zealous in proclaiming, ‘*If we really want to obey God, we would be meeting on Saturday’s.*’ But this becomes very unhealthy, even laying a burden on the shoulders of God’s people. This leads to bondage not freedom in Christ.

So, as mentioned previously, we cannot stop in the Old Testament in developing our theological understanding. Thus, we can see that the Sabbath was instituted to

foreshadow something greater. It was a type just as the land or temple or Passover Lamb or high priesthood was.

The same stands true of the Sabbath rest. That day of rest, on the seventh day, pointed to something greater in the new covenant. Paul's words in Colossians proves very helpful in defining the Sabbath in the new covenant:

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Col 2:16-17)

Everything from the dietary laws (food and drink), to the festivals and feasts of the Old Testament, even to the Sabbath rest, they all pointed to Christ. They were a mere shadow of things to come. *'The reality, however, is found in Christ.'* Thus, Christ is our Sabbath rest. He is the one who brings *'rest for your souls'* (Matt 11:29). And, the writer to the Hebrews concurs by stating:

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God. (Heb 4:9)

Of course, we must also learn to physically rest. We are finite human beings. Most church leaders especially struggle to take days off or holidays. But, in regards to walking out the directives of God, for those of us who are in Christ, we have entered God's Sabbath rest. And that is good news!

4.3.3 Concluding Thoughts

In the end, the Sabbath is not about Sunday's or Saturday's. For God, it really does not matter which day of the week your local church meets, or what day of the week you take off from work. Traditionally, Christians have met on Sunday's in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ on that Sunday. But God's heart is that we ultimately enter his rest through faith in Christ.

But going back to God's Sabbath rest that we read about in Genesis 2:1-3, why is such a pattern set *'in the beginning'* concerning the seventh day?

Many of us will know that the number seven is significant in Hebrew understanding. It is a number meaning *fullness* or *completion*. Therefore, when God set the pattern of rest on the seventh day, he did this as a *declaration of completion*. The creation work had been completed!

Thus, when we come to Christ and the new covenant, we see him as that complete, full and eternal Sabbath rest of God. And, through faith in him, we enter into to full and complete rest that God offers to humanity. And we being to enter into a new creation that will be completed one day just as God completed the original creation.

Appendix 1 – List of ‘First Mentions’

Adultery	Exodus 20:14
Altar	Genesis 8:20
Angel	Genesis 6:7
Archer	Genesis 21:20
Bird	Genesis 1:21
Blessing	Genesis 12:2
Camp	Genesis 32:2
Cave Dweller	Genesis 19:30
Chariot	Genesis 41:43
Child	Genesis 11:30
Child Named Before Birth	Genesis 16:11
City Builder	Genesis 4:17
Coffin	Genesis 50:26
Command	Genesis 1:3
Congregation	Exodus 12:3
Created	Genesis 1:1
Dancing	Exodus 15:20
Darkness	Genesis 1:2
Death	Genesis 24:67
Dew	Genesis 27:28
Disaster	Genesis 19:19
Dream	Genesis 20:3
Drunk	Genesis 9:21
Dungeon	Genesis 40:15
Earth	Genesis 1:1
Emancipator	Exodus 3:7-22
Embalming	Genesis 50:2
Execution	Genesis 40:20-22
Family	Genesis 8:19
Farmer	Genesis 4:2
Father	Genesis 2:24
Fear	Genesis 9:2
Flood	Genesis 6:17
Food	Genesis 1:29
Food Control	Genesis 41:25-27
Forgiveness	Genesis 50:17
Friend	Genesis 38:12
Game	Genesis 25:28
Gardener	Genesis 2:15
Gift	Genesis 9:3
God	Genesis 1:1
Gold	Genesis 2:11
Grace Of God	Ezra 9:8
Grave	Genesis 23:6
Guilt	Genesis 26:10
Harlot	Genesis 34:31
Hate	Genesis 24:60
Healing	Deuteronomy 32:39
Heart	Genesis 6:5
Heavens	Genesis 1:1
Heir	Genesis 15:2
Home	Genesis 27:5

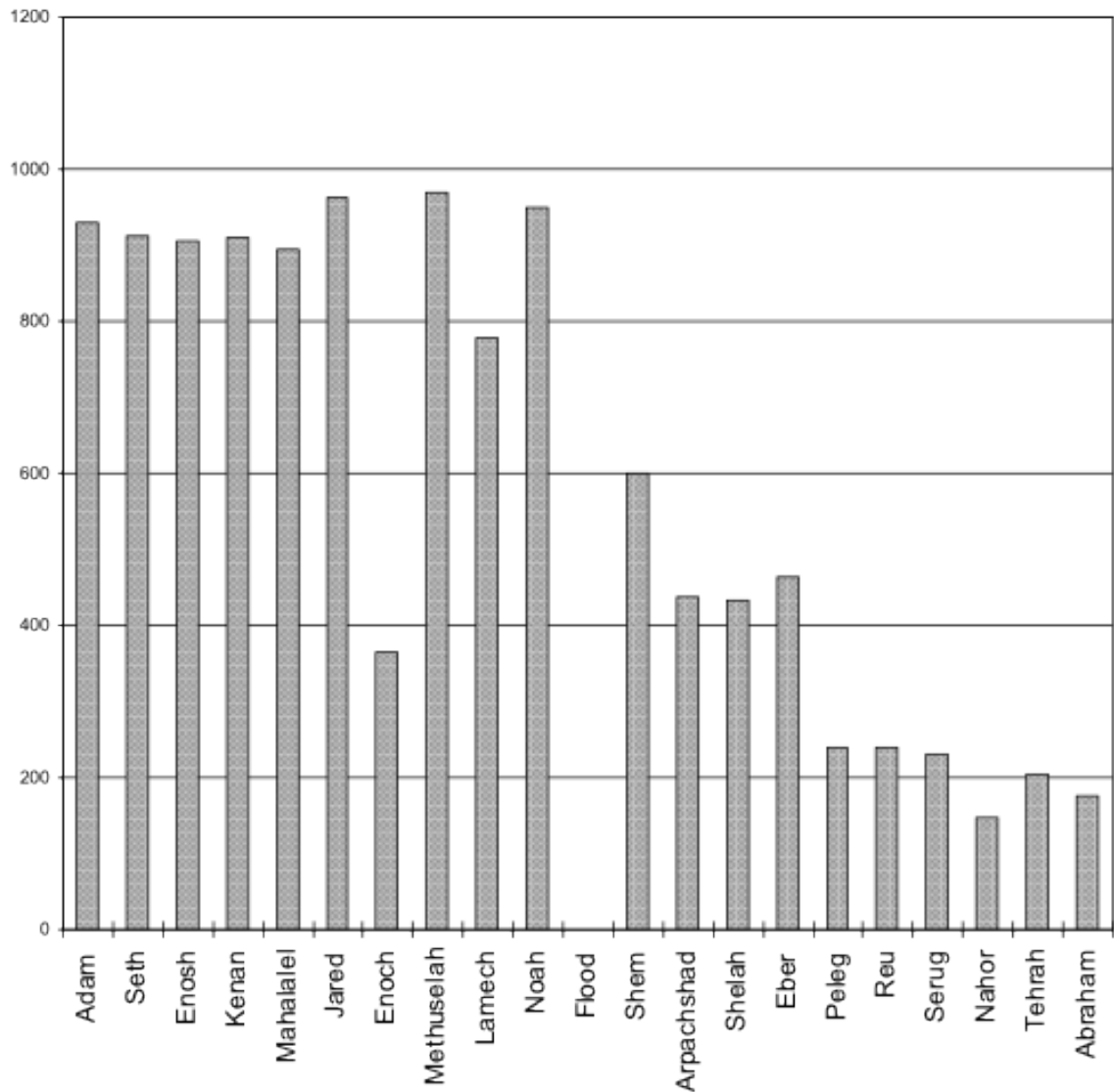
Hunter	Genesis 10:8,9
Husband	Genesis 3:6
Idol	Genesis 31:19
Jail	Genesis 39:20
Joy	Genesis 31:27
Kill	Genesis 4:8
King	Genesis 14:1
Kiss	Genesis 27:26
Man To Interpret	Genesis 41:15
Man To Wear A Ring	Genesis 41:42
Marriage	Genesis 34:8
Oath	Genesis 21:23,24
Pilgrim	Genesis 12:1-8
Prayer	Genesis 4:26
Preacher To Become Drunk	Genesis 9:20,21
Prophecy	Genesis 3:15
Purchase Of Land	Genesis 23:3-20
Question	Genesis 3:1
Rain	Genesis 7:1-12
Rainbow	Genesis 9:13
Saddle	Genesis 22:3
Scribe	Exodus 24:4
Shipbuilder	Genesis 6:14,22
Sin	Genesis 3:1-24
Snake	Genesis 49:17
Sword	Genesis 3:24
Temptation	Genesis 3:1-6
Tower	Genesis 11:4,5
Veil	Genesis 24:65
Violence	Genesis 6:11
Wage Contract	Genesis 29:15-20
War	Genesis 14:2
Wealth	Genesis 31:1
Well	Genesis 16:14
Wife	Genesis 2:24
Wind	Genesis 8:1
Wine	Genesis 9:21
Wish	Genesis 23:8
Witness	Genesis 21:30
Woman	Genesis 2:22
Woman Thief	Genesis 31:19
Words Spoken To Man	Genesis 1:28
Worship	Genesis 4:3-5

Appendix 2 – Names of God

Name of God	Meaning	Reference	Significance
Elohim	God	Genesis 1:1; Numbers 23:19; Psalm 19:1	General name for God Refers to God's power and might. He is the only supreme and true God.
Yahweh	The LORD	Genesis 2:4; Exodus 6:2-3	The proper name of the divine person.
El Elyon	God Most High	Genesis 14:17-20; Numbers 24:16; Psalm 7:17; Isaiah 14:13-14	He is above all gods; nothing in life is more sacred.
El Roi	God Who Sees	Genesis 16:13	God oversees all of creation and the affairs of people.
El Shaddai	God Almighty	Genesis 17:1; Psalm 91:1	God is all-powerful.
Yahweh Yireh	The LORD Will Provide	Genesis 22:14	God will provide our real needs.
Yahweh Nissi	The LORD Is My Banner	Exodus 17:15	We should remember God for helping us.
Adonay (Adonai)	Lord	Deuteronomy 6:4	God alone is the head over all.
Yahweh Elohe Yisrael	LORD God of Israel	Judges 5:3; Psalm 59:5; Isaiah 17:6; Zephaniah 2:9	He is the God of the nation of Israel
Yahweh Shalom	The LORD Is Peace.	Judges 6:24	God gives us peace so we need not fear.
Qedosh Yisrael	Holy One of Israel	Isaiah 1:4	God is morally perfect.
Yahweh Sabaoth	LORD of Hosts	1 Samuel 1:3; Isaiah 6:1-3	God is our savior and protector. (Host refers to armies but also to all the heavenly powers.)
El Olam	The Everlasting God	Isaiah 40:28-31	God is eternal. He will never die.
Yahweh Tsidkenu	The LORD Is Our Righteousness	Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16	God is our standard for right behaviour. He alone can make us righteous.
Yahweh Shammah	The LORD Is There	Ezekiel 48:35	God is always present with us.
Attiq Yomin	Ancient of Days	Daniel 7:9, 13	God is the ultimate authority. He will one day judge all the nations.

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Appendix 4 – Age Comparisons of the Patriarchs



Appendix 5

The Years of the Patriarchs

