

EPOCH ONE

BEFORE THE PATRIARCHS

Humankind's earliest ancestors appear in what is called "prehistory"—before events were recorded. Then humans pioneered writing, and "history" began.

CREATION—2000 B.C.

The Bible begins its story with the accounts of creation and of humankind's early history. The epoch extending from undatable creation to about 2000 B.C. witnessed the beginning both of life itself and of humankind's first civilizations. This is the time before the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long before Israel became a specific people. It is the time of humankind's earliest ancestors.

The very earliest part of this epoch is called "prehistory" because it covers the story of humans before there were recorded events. The advent of writing around 3000 B.C. eventually ended "prehistory," as humans began preserving information concerning their economies, laws, and religions. The various written documents of this period, including lists of kings, inscriptions from buildings, and historical epics, mark the start of the historical era.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeologists arrange historical and cultural evidence according to the most vital metal of each period, such as stone, copper, bronze, or iron. The earliest period, called the Stone Age, is divided into the Old Stone, Middle Stone, and New Stone ages. A later period, the Bronze Age, is also divided into the Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, and Late Bronze ages. The dates for these periods are approximate, of course, because cultural changes always come gradually. Very early dates are based on theories of evolution and geology, and interpreters of the Bible differ on how such dates relate to the creation accounts in Genesis.

Old Stone Age	before 10,000 B.C.
Middle Stone Age	10,000 to 8000 B.C.
New Stone Age	8000 to 4000 B.C.
Copper-Stone Age	4000 to 3000 B.C.
Early Bronze Age	3000 to 2000 B.C.

The Old Stone Age is designated by the name "Paleolithic." It was an age of hunting and food-gathering. People lived in caves or temporary shelters. They made implements of flint or chipped stone, and subsisted from what they could gather from nature itself.

The Middle Stone Age is called the Mesolithic period. It was a transitional stage to a food-producing economy. During this period real settlements first appeared, and there was an evolution in the arts of civilization.

The New Stone Age, or Neolithic period, is distinguished by several advances. One of the most notable, the invention of pottery, divides the New Stone Age into a prepottery period (c. 8000–5500 B.C.) and a pottery period (c. 5500–4000 B.C.). Other developments included agriculture, textiles, and the domestication of animals.

The Copper-Stone Age, or Chalcolithic period, saw a transition to a significant use of copper. At some sites from this period, dwellings were underground, entered by shafts from the surface and connected by tunnels. Copper working was found in the many pits, ovens, and fireplaces common in such sites.

The Early Bronze Age is the period in which we leave "prehistory" and enter the "historical" period. This is the period in which written records appear. The Mesopotamians pioneered writing, but Egypt was quick to recognize the benefits of it. At the site of Arad in Palestine, archaeologists have uncovered a potsherd bearing the signature of Narmer, who is often identified with Menes, the pharaoh of Egypt's first dynasty.



THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

The story of the Bible is linked with the histories of two great lands: Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Mesopotamia two different cultures developed, one in the south and the other in the north.

The earliest known inhabitants of Mesopotamia lived in the southern part, the land of Sumer or southern Babylonia. Known as Sumerians, this culture greatly influenced all of the ancient Near East, including the Israelites. The Sumerians developed a township system of government, consisting of city-states, in which the temple of the local deity was the center of economic, cultural, and religious life.

In northern Babylonia lived the Accadians. This culture took its name from the town of Agade, also known as Accad. The Accadian culture did not develop the independent city-state system of the south, but seems to have existed as a single territory. While there were temples, the palace and household played the more important role in the Accadian economy. Around 2300 B.C. a northerner named Sargon of Agade was able to unify north and south Babylonia.

Egypt was a land divided into two kingdoms: Lower Egypt around the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt of the Nile Valley. Egypt's prehistory or predynastic period witnessed the development of rulership by pharaohs. This period ended around 3000 B.C. with the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt by the ruler Menes, resulting in the First Dynasty. During the following Archaic period, the country came to accept a divine monarchy in which the pharaoh was considered the incarnation of the sky god Horus. Later pharaohs of the Old Kingdom, beginning about 2700 B.C., became famous for their pyramids.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The Book of Genesis is usually divided at Ge 12, where the story of the patriarch Abraham begins. The chapters of Ge 1–11, which concern the time before the patriarchs, are called "primeval history" because they relate the first ages of the world. Primeval history tells of a time much different from what the patriarchs would later experience, and from what humans experience now.

The major narratives of this primeval history give an account of creation, a great Flood, and the tower at Babel. The creation account (Ge 1–3) describes the creation of all things, including humankind. The newly created humans rebel against God, resulting in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The

Flood account (Ge 6–9) tells of the continued evil in human hearts, the Flood, and God's judgment upon humanity. The redemption of Noah's family offers a new beginning. Following the Flood, Ge 11 narrates the spread of the human race and its arrogant attempt to build a tower to the heavens. God confuses their languages, forcing them to disperse.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

Biblical and secular historians agree that human civilization began in the ancient Near East. The earliest large communities developed in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and Iran) and in Egypt. Palestine, where biblical Israel is found, lies along the best road between Mesopotamia and Egypt, and so the Bible's own history appropriately begins with these two civilization centers.

The task of assigning specific dates to this ancient history is difficult and uncertain, but scholars have placed the first human settlements as early as 7,000 to 8,000 years before Christ. Although dating the early events of civilization is elusive, we can at least follow the general stages by which human communities developed.

Advances in technology made it possible for humans to live in large communities. First they developed stone tools, then discovered how to make clay vessels, how to extract and use copper ore, and, by about 3000 B.C., how to use bronze. In terms of food and support, humans moved from small family groups hunting and gathering their food to larger nomadic clans tending domesticated animals. Farming developed next, and by 3000 B.C. people in Mesopotamia and Egypt were using sophisticated irrigation techniques to harness the regular floods of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile rivers. Now for the first time, food could be produced in large supply, enough to support cities and even empires.

The period from 3000 to 2000 B.C. (called the Early Bronze Age) saw the development of several such empires: the civilizations of Sumer, Accad, and Ur in Mesopotamia and the Old Kingdom of Egypt. Towering monuments testify to the amazing technological sophistication of these cultures. This was the age of the great pyramids in Egypt and of similar structures in Mesopotamia, called ziggurats. These ancient peoples worshiped many gods: gods of light, darkness, skies, seas, the land, the sun, the moon and stars, plants, and animals. Ancient writings from this time describe not only these gods, but also the creation of the world and a great flood.

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TRANSITION

The Book of Genesis

The Old Testament as a whole chronicles the history of the nation of Israel. This nation does not emerge as an entity, though, until the Book of Exodus, when God appears to the twelve tribes at Sinai. Genesis, then, is the prologue to the history of Israel. Chapters 1–11 tell about the creation and earliest history of all humankind, and chapters 12–50 describe God's working within the chosen family of Abraham, from whom Israel descended.

Within the theological narratives of Ge 1–11 are several brief comments that reflect the advancing civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are conflicts between hunters and shepherds and between shepherds and farmers. Humans develop technology and craftsmanship and establish the first cities. Chapter 11 describes humanity's technical skill (and vaulting ambition) in its account of a tower, or ziggurat, in the plains of Shinar (Mesopotamia). As in the Mesopotamian and Egyptian writings, there are stories of creation and of a worldwide flood.

Genesis, along with the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy, has traditionally been attributed to Moses. Many scholars retain this view today, but others, noting abrupt changes in vocabulary and style and certain perspectives that appear to come from a later time, argue that the book contains several sources and traditions, some much older than others. In either case, whether written entirely by Moses or composed from 900 to 400 B.C. of various ancient strands, the Book of Genesis is a recounting of Israel's origins by one who knew that all this was leading to God's choice of Israel as a "treasured possession . . . out of all nations" (Ex 19:5).

• **Genesis 1:1—4:26**

Genesis**The Beginning**

1 :1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."

⁷So God made the vault and separated

the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." ²¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." ²³And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the

THE CREATOR GOD IS NOT SUN OR MOON (Ge 1:16)

In Ge 1:16 the two great lights created by God are called the “greater light” and “lesser light.” The words “sun” and “moon” were not omitted by accident from this verse. The writer of Genesis was aware that two prominent gods worshiped in the ancient Near East were the sun and the moon.

In Egypt the sun was associated with several important gods, including Amon-Re, Re, and Aton. Egyptians believed that the sun, as the god Re, created the world by his own personified power. One of Re’s “eyes” was the moon god Tefnut. Another Egyptian god was Ptah, who was also considered the creator of all things. Ptah’s two eyes were the sun and moon.

In Mesopotamia the sun god Shamash was worshiped as the benefactor of the oppressed. Night was seen as the passing of the sun to the netherworld or underworld. Ancient peoples prayed to the hidden sun for mediation between the dead and the living.

Canaanite worshipers knew the sun as Shemesh. The appearance of this god’s name in place names, such as Beth Shemesh (1Sa 6:12), hints at the importance of Shemesh to the polytheistic Canaanites. While they also worshiped the moon, a moon god was only of secondary importance in their pantheon of deities.

The author of Ge 1:14–19 makes the case that the Creator of the world is on a different plane than the sun or the moon. They are only the “greater” and “lesser” lights. No one should acknowledge them as deities or confuse them with the true God. They are simply creations of the Creator God.

ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then 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,^a and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸God 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.”

²⁹Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.



Plants & Animals

In relatively dry climates a flourishing tree is a conspicuous sign of adequate water (Ge 2:9). Gardens have been cultivated in the Near East for thousands of years, and the success of the gardens of Babylon is proverbial. Egyptian rulers also gave attention to their gardens and to the fish and birds in them.

2 ¹Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth^b and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, ⁶but streams^c came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷Then the LORD God formed a man^d from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the

^a 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth* ^b 5 Or *land*; also in verse 6

^c 6 Or *mist* ^d 7 The Hebrew for *man* (*adam*) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *ground* (*adamah*); it is also the name *Adam* (see verse 20).

CREATION BY CONQUEST IN BABYLON (Ge 1:26–29)

In the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 B.C.), the fourth day of the New Year's celebration was highlighted by reciting the *Enuma Elish*, a liturgical text relating the creation of the physical world. This Babylonian poem was originally composed sometime before or during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1133–1116 B.C.) to glorify Marduk as the divine ruler and establisher of order in the universe.

According to the Babylonian epic, before the world existed there were only Apsu and Tiamat, the god and goddess of fresh and salt water. Apsu and Tiamat give birth to deities, and the noise of these younger gods upsets them so much that they plot to slay their children. However, Ea, god of wisdom, discovers the plan and kills Apsu before the slaughter of the gods can be carried out. From the corpse of the slain god, Ea creates a home for himself and his spouse, the goddess Damkina. Here Ea and Damkina bear a son—Marduk.

Meanwhile, Tiamat, finding her husband slain and her peace disturbed by the gods' continuing noise, creates for herself an army of venomous monsters. She musters this horrendous force, appointing Kingu as leader, to kill off the younger gods and wreak revenge for the death of Apsu. Overhearing this scheme, Ea is overwhelmed by the coming terror. All the younger deities assemble to discuss their fate; all appear hopeless. Then the youthful Marduk volunteers to defend the gods.

In the ensuing battle all the hordes of monsters are killed, ending with the deaths of Kingu and Tiamat herself. Marduk divides the corpse of Tiamat, providing for two heavens and the earth. From the blood of Kingu, Marduk creates humans.

Some aspects of creation in the Babylonian epic have counterparts in the Genesis creation story (Ge 1:1—2:4a). The sun and moon are treated as physical, created entities and not as deities. Light is created before other objects. The heavens are populated with the sun, moon, and stars in order to mark off the months, days, and festivals. Humans are created only at the end of creation. Yet also important are the theological differences. In the Babylonian story, humans were created as slaves for the gods, so that the deities would not have to work anymore. Genesis offers a much higher estimation of the worth of humanity in the eyes of God (Ge 1:26–29).

Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^a and onyx are also there.)¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^b ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam^c no suitable helper was found. ²¹So 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^d and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^e he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

TIME CAPSULE**26,000 to 10,000 B.C.**

26,000 Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Japan

23,000 Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Australia

20,000 First known ovens, in the Ukraine

13,000 Flutes known in France

12,000 Boomerang known in Australia

11,000 Wolves or dogs tamed in Palestine

10,000 Prehistoric cave paintings, Lascaux, France

10,000–8000 Middle Stone Age

^a 12 Or *good*; *pearls* ^b 13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia

^c 20 Or *the man* ^d 21 Or *took part of the man's side*

^e 22 Or *part*

WHERE WAS EDEN? (Ge 2:10–14)

The Book of Genesis states that God planted a garden “in the east, in Eden” (Ge 2:8). The name “Eden” is used not only for the region where God placed the garden (2:10), but also for the garden itself (2:15). For centuries biblical commentators have speculated on the location of Eden, studying the description of the garden for possible hints.

The garden is associated with four rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates (2:10–14). The last two of these rivers are known. Thus the mention of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers would suggest a location for Eden somewhere in Mesopotamia.

Unfortunately, the other rivers, Pishon and Gihon, are obscure and defy absolute placement. Pishon was in the land of Havilah (2:11), which has been associated with Arabia (Ge 25:18), as well as with India. Gihon was in Cush (2:13), which was an ancient name for the area south of Egypt. Some scholars have argued that Pishon and Gihon represent the Indus and Nile rivers, but others contend that they may have been canals.

To the ancient writer of Genesis, Eden was a place blessed with an abundant supply of water. Unfortunately, this writer’s description of Eden’s rivers will not help us pinpoint a location for Eden itself.



The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then 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.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the gar-

den in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring^a and hers;
he will crush^b your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very
severe;

with painful labor you will give birth to
children.

Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.”

TIME CAPSULE



8000 to 7000 B.C.

8000 Archaeological evidence of settlement at Jericho

8000 Lentils and peas grown in the Middle East

8000–4000 New Stone Age

7500 Sheep domesticated in the Middle East

7500 Hatchet used in Europe to fell trees

7000 The oldest known fortifications, at Jericho

^a 15 Or seed ^b 15 Or strike

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

²⁰Adam^a named his wife Eve,^b because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²²And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^c of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 ¹Adam^a made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.^d She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth^e a man.” ²Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

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

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you

angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^f While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

¹⁰The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵But the LORD said to him, “Not so^g; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,^h east of Eden.

¹⁷Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. ¹⁸To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. ²²Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out ofⁱ bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.

^a 20,1 Or *The man* ^b 20 Eve probably means *living*.

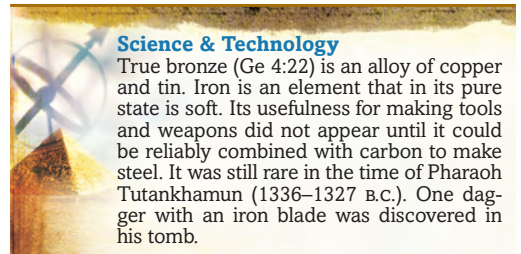
^c 24 Or *placed in front* ^d 1 Cain sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth* or *acquired*.

^e 1 Or *have acquired*
^f 8 Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have “*Let’s go out to the field.*”

^g 15 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*

^h 16 *Nod* means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).

ⁱ 22 Or *who instructed all who work in*



Science & Technology

True bronze (Ge 4:22) is an alloy of copper and tin. Iron is an element that in its pure state is soft. Its usefulness for making tools and weapons did not appear until it could be reliably combined with carbon to make steel. It was still rare in the time of Pharaoh Tutankhamun (1336–1327 B.C.). One dagger with an iron blade was discovered in his tomb.

²³Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.

²⁴If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

²⁵Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth,^a saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” ²⁶Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to call on^b the name of the LORD.

TRANSITION

Records of the Descendants

Genesis 1–11 tells much of its story by means of genealogies. At the end of the Cain and Abel account is a list of eight descendants of Cain (Ge 4:17–22), among whom are the ancestors of pastoral nomads (v. 20), musicians (v. 21), and metalworkers (v. 22). In Ge 5 the line of Adam’s descendants through Seth is given, breaking off just before the Flood. Finally, in Ge 10 the peoples of the earth are listed under the three sons of Noah, categorized according to clans, languages, location, and nationality.

It is possible, using the numbers of these lists, to add up the years and thus date the creation of the world at about 4004 B.C. Such computations were published in A.D. 1650–1654 by the archbishop James Ussher. Many scholars, though, argue that modern historical dating and chronological specificity were foreign to the ancient mind and suggest that the exact numbers should not be read so mechanically. Furthermore, the numbers themselves vary in different text traditions, showing many disagreements between the Hebrew Bible, Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament).

Thus different interpreters treat the genealogies in different ways. Some add up the successive generations, as did Ussher, to arrive at a date for creation sometime around 4004 B.C. Others take the genealogies as the schemes of ancient mathematicians, with different purposes, and accept that a date for the creation of the world is impossible to determine.

• Genesis 5:1—6:22

Genesis

From Adam to Noah

5 :1 This is the written account of Adam’s family line.

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. ²He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind”^c when they were created.

³When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁵Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died.

⁶When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father^d of Enosh. ⁷After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸Altogether, Seth lived a total of 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Altogether, Kenan lived a total of 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Altogether, Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Altogether, Jared lived a total of 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²²After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. ²⁴Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

²⁵When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived

^a ²⁵ Seth probably means *granted*. ^b ²⁶ Or to *proclaim*

^c ² Hebrew *adam* ^d ⁶ *Father* may mean *ancestor*; also in verses 7-26.

THE SUMERIAN KING LIST (Ge 5:1–32)

The Sumerian King List is a text from southern Mesopotamia, written sometime very early in the 2nd millennium B.C. The list presumably follows a tradition going back to the early 3rd millennium B.C. It has interesting parallels with the genealogical list in Ge 5.

In its existing form, the Sumerian King List is a propaganda text designed by the kings of Isin to affirm their rule as legitimate. It delineates the history of Sumer (and Accad) by showing the succession of dynasties (or cities) from the beginning of time to the writer's present. Each monarch in the early period rules for a very lengthy period (thousands of years on the average). Similarly, six of Adam's descendants listed in Ge 5 lived in excess of 900 years (e.g., Ge 5:5, 8, 11).

The King List abruptly and tersely mentions the great flood, which cuts the dynastic lines in half. Interestingly, after the flood, the reigns of the monarchs begin to decrease from thousands to hundreds of years. Gilgamesh, the famous hero from Uruk, ruled a mere 126 years. The lengths of reigns finally fall within the normal span of a human lifetime. Likewise, the genealogy of Ge 11:10–26 shows a continual diminishing of the human life span after the Genesis Flood.

The Sumerian literary tradition, like the biblical record, contains the account that humankind lived to an advanced age in pre-Flood antiquity. Both also agree in general that ages began to decline immediately after the Flood until, finally, modern life spans were experienced. This shared characteristic of the Sumerian and biblical records lends credibility to the view that both cultures came from the same literary setting or environment.

782 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. ²⁹He named him Noah^a and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Wickedness in the World

6 ¹When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with^b humans forever, for they are mortal^c; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."

⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

⁵The 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. ⁶The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷So 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." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight

TIME CAPSULE		7000 to 5000 B.C.
7000	Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Europe	
6770	Carbon-14 dating of ashes at Jericho	
6500	Cattle domesticated in Turkey	
6500	Settlement at Ras Shamra (Ugarit) in Syria	
6500	Paintings from Spain show people gathering wild honey	
6000	Domestic cat is known, in Cyprus	
6000	Skull with evidence of surgery (trepanning), from Europe	
5859	Carbon-14 dating of early fortification at Jericho	
5500	Pottery is first known in Palestine	
5000	Copper is melted (1083° C) and cast in the Near East	
5000	Evidence of temple at Eridu, Iraq	
5000	Grapes are cultivated in Europe	
5000	Mirrors found in graves in central Turkey	

^a ²⁹ Noah sounds like the Hebrew for *comfort*. ^b ³ Or *My spirit will not remain in* ^c ³ Or *corrupt*

THE FLOOD THROUGH OTHER EYES (GE 6:5–7)

Divine destruction of the world by means of a flood is a motif known in cultures from around the world. Most of these stories appear to have had their origin in the biblical account (Ge 6:5–9:29). However, the ancient Near East has numerous myths of the great flood which are separate retellings of the same event.

Mesopotamian stories of the flood are first found written in the Sumerian language, in the earliest known literature (3rd millennium B.C.). A variety of retellings produced a number of versions. The two most famous flood stories outside the Bible are the Gilgamesh Epic and the story of Atrahasis.

Numerous other references and renditions of the flood are found scattered throughout the classical literature and other texts of the ancient Near East. The flood itself divides the history of the world into the period before it occurred and the current age. Things now are not as they were then.



and was full of violence. ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴So make yourself an ark of cypress^a wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. ¹⁶Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit^c high all around. ^d Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.”

²²Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

TRANSITION

How Long Was Noah in the Ark?

The narrator of the Flood tradition offers several dates, indicating when certain events took place. The time frame of these dates, cited by year, month and day based on Noah’s age, has Noah, his family and the animals confined in the ark for more than a year—371 days.

In Ge 7:11—8:19 are five dates. The first instance

at 7:11 marks when the rain began. Five months later, the ark rested on Ararat (8:4). Two and a half months later the mountains were seen (8:5). After another three months Noah removed the covering of the ark (8:13). Finally, Noah, his family and the animals went out of the ark 57 days later (8:14–19). The days between each date, assuming 30-day months as the narrator appears to do, are 150 + 74 + 90 + 57, totaling 371 days.

• Genesis 7:1—11:32

Genesis

7:1 The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”

⁵And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark,

^a 14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

^b 15 That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high

^c 16 That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters

^d 16 The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

WHEN THE GODS TIRE OF NOISY HUMANS (Ge 7:1)

The story of Atrahasis, written during the reign of Ammisaduqa, king of Babylon (1646–1626 B.C.), is a variant of the Gilgamesh Epic. The title of the Atrahasis story means “When the gods like man.” Yet the story, like that of the Genesis Flood story (Ge 7:4), tells of the gods destroying much of humankind.

The reason given in this story for the flood was that the humans on the earth had become too numerous and their noise was disturbing the gods. The deities planned several devices to reduce the population including drought, plague, and famine, but each time the people survived. Finally, a flood was devised from which the people could not escape. It was Ea who warned the hero, Atrahasis, to save the animals and craftsmen in a boat, which he then did.

The humans had previously fed the gods by their sacrifices. As the seven days and nights of the flood raged and humans died, the deities became hungry and thirsty. Thus they were happy to have some people survive the flood.

The Mesopotamian legend contrasts with the ethical emphasis in Genesis. The Mesopotamian gods destroyed humans because they were noisy, yet wanted some humans left for service. The God of Genesis destroyed humans because they were wicked and corrupt (Ge 6:5–7, 11–13). He allowed Noah and his family to live because they were righteous (Ge 7:1).

as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

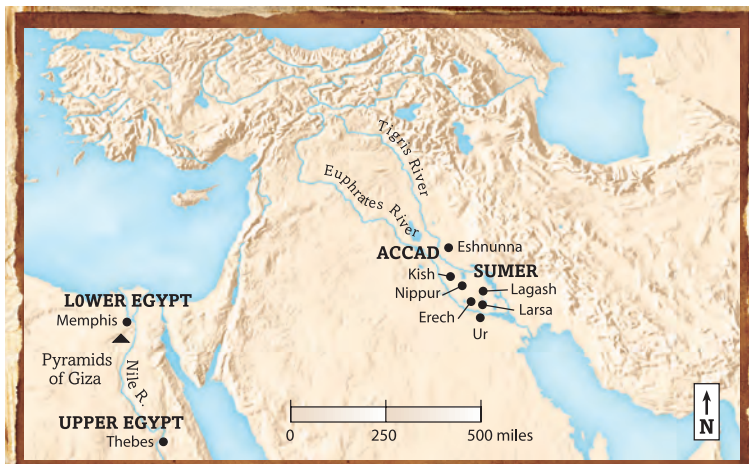
¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month — on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶The animals going in were male and female

of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. ²⁰The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. ^{a,b} ²¹Every living thing that moved on land perished — birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

^a 20 That is, about 23 feet or about 6.8 meters ^b 20 Or rose more than fifteen cubits, and the mountains were covered



The Ancient Near East after 3000 B.C.

During the 3rd millennium Lower and Upper Egypt were united. Egypt’s Old Kingdom (2700–2160 B.C.) produced the great pyramids, such as those at Giza. In Mesopotamia, the land of Sumer developed a system of independent city-states. Toward the end of the millennium this city-state rule was replaced by a more extensive territorial rule centered in Accad.

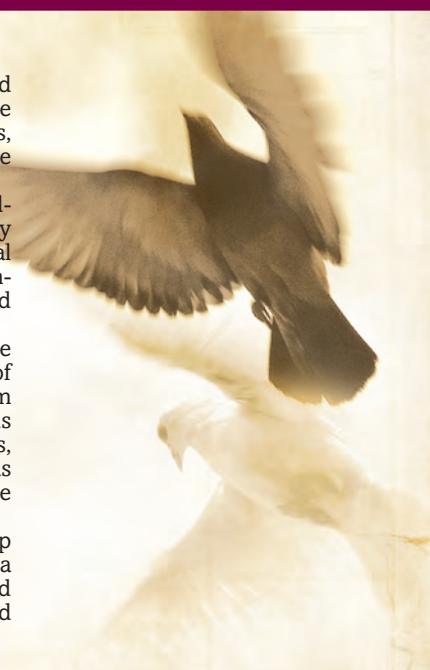
WHEN THE BIRD DOES NOT RETURN (Ge 8:6–12)

Both similarities and differences exist between the biblical Flood story in Ge 6–9 and the Mesopotamian flood legend known as the Gilgamesh Epic. Among the similarities are the birds—doves, ravens, sparrows—that are sent out to determine if the floodwaters have receded (Ge 8:6–12).

Though the Gilgamesh flood story appears already in the mid-3rd millennium Sumerian stories, the epic account most widely known comes from the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). The story is related by the flood survivor, Utnapishtim, at the edge of the world, where Gilgamesh (king of Uruk around 2600 B.C.) had sought him to discover how to become immortal.

There is no reason given in this account for the decision by the council of the gods to destroy the earth. However, Ea, the god of wisdom, realizing that destruction was a mistake, warns Utnapishtim that a flood is coming. Utnapishtim tears down his house and builds a boat, into which he gathers animals in pairs, seeds of all plants, his relatives, and skilled craftsmen. The deities unleash the flood as a weapon for seven days, destroying everything which is not in the boat and terrifying themselves as well.

After the divine flood ceased, the boat rested on a mountaintop in the Zagros Mountains. Utnapishtim releases first a dove, then a sparrow, both of whom return without finding a place to land, and lastly a raven, who does not return. The flood is finally over and everything is allowed to leave the boat and repopulate the earth.



²⁴The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.


8 ¹But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ²Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to re-

cede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

⁶After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark ⁷and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹²He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

¹³By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you — the birds, the animals, and

TIME CAPSULE		5000 to 4000 B.C.
5000		Copper is melted (1083 B.C.) and cast in the Near East
4500		Copper is known in Egypt
4500		Bronze and brass are derived from copper
4500		Sockets for hinging doors used in Sumer
4300		Village culture in the Fayum (Egypt), west of the Nile
4004		Ussher's date for the creation
4000		Casting of molten silver and gold in the Near East
4000		Evidence of bits used for horses, from the Ukraine

EGYPT'S FIRST DYNASTIES

When the Egyptian priest Manetho (c. 305–285 B.C.) wrote a history of Egypt in Greek, he divided the history of the kings into 30 periods known as “dynasties.” Manetho’s dynasties are still used as an outline for Egypt’s history, but have been divided into larger historical periods. The 1st and 2nd Dynasties are Egypt’s formative age; the 3rd through 8th Dynasties are her pyramid age.

The Archaic Period The Dynasties

3000–2700 B.C.

1st and 2nd Dynasties. Menes is the traditional founder of the 1st Dynasty. He unified the two predynastic kingdoms of Lower and Upper Egypt.

The Old Kingdom The Dynasties

2700–2600 B.C.

3rd Dynasty. Pyramid age begins with the Step Pyramid of Pharaoh Djoser in 2650 B.C.

2600–2500 B.C.

4th Dynasty. The Great Pyramid becomes one of the seven wonders of the world.

2500–2350 B.C.

5th Dynasty. The sun god Re of Heliopolis is considered the father of the living ruler. The god Osiris is the god of the dead.

2350–2160 B.C.

6th–8th Dynasties. Weni, an Egyptian official, records 5 military expeditions against the “Sand-dwellers” of southern Palestine.

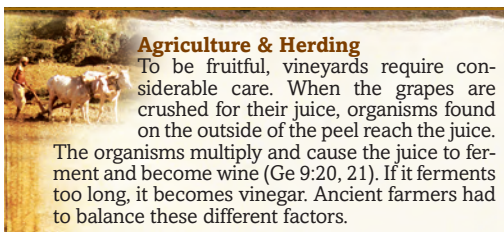
all the creatures that move along the ground — so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it.”

¹⁸So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds — everything that moves on land — came out of the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though^a every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

²²“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

^a ²¹ Or *humans, for*



Agriculture & Herding

To be fruitful, vineyards require considerable care. When the grapes are crushed for their juice, organisms found on the outside of the peel reach the juice.

The organisms multiply and cause the juice to ferment and become wine (Ge 9:20, 21). If it ferments too long, it becomes vinegar. Ancient farmers had to balance these different factors.

God’s Covenant With Noah

9 ¹Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. ²The 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. ³Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

⁴“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

⁶“Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.

TIME CAPSULE



4000 to 3500 B.C.

4000–3000 Copper-Stone Age

3700 Two villages combine to create Uruk, the earliest urban site

3500 Bronze is known in Ur

3500 Egyptian art shows greyhounds

3500 Village culture around Beersheba

3500 The olive is cultivated in Palestine

GOD'S BOW OR A GODDESS'S NECKLACE (Ge 9:8–17)

The Genesis Flood narrative closes with a promise by God that the destruction of the the human race by a flood would not occur again. In Ge 9:8–17 the covenant between God and Noah represents a binding commitment between God and humans. God initiates a covenant never to destroy humanity with water again, and the sign of this covenant forever is God's rainbow placed in the sky.

At the end of the Mesopotamian flood narratives there are also speeches made by the deities that humans will not be destroyed again. There is also a sign established in the sky as a reminder. However, the purpose and context is quite different from that of the biblical Flood story. In both the Gilgamesh Epic and the story of Atrahasis, the flood ends with the majority of gods glad to have the terror over.

The reaction of the deities varied. Ellil, the warrior god, is furious over the survival of the few remaining humans. On the other hand, the goddess Ninhursag (Nintu or Ishtar in some renditions), the goddess of both human and divine children, is devastated that her children have been destroyed. In an appeal made in highest heaven, Ninhursag declares that this deed by the gods is an evil against her and that her grief must be appeased. She takes the "big flies," created by Anu, makes them into a necklace, and sets it up as a daily reminder to the gods never to destroy the people, on whom the gods depend, again.

In the Mesopotamian flood narrative the covenant was made solely on the divine level, and the sign was for the gods alone. In Genesis God's rainbow is a visible sign of his covenant promises to Noah, to Noah's descendants, and to all living creatures of the earth (Ge 9:12, 17).

⁷As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰and with every living creature that was with you — the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you — every living creature on earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹²And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the

covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."


¹⁷So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

The Sons of Noah

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth.

²⁰Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded^a to plant a vineyard. ²¹When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. ²³But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said,

TIME CAPSULE		3500 to 3000 B.C.
3500		Sumerians develop advanced civilization in southern Mesopotamia
3300		Domestication of the horse
3250		Potter's wheel from Ur
3200		Earliest writing, from Uruk in the Sumerian language
3200		Earliest picture of a boat with a sail, from Egypt
3150		Pictographs from Uruk showing four-wheeled carts
3100		Earliest depiction of a chariot
3000		Egyptians write in hieroglyphic script

^a 20 Or soil, was the first

THE FIRST WORLD EMPIRE (Ge 10:8–10)

The city of Accad was one of the major urban centers in central Mesopotamia and, according to Ge 10:10, one of the first cities in the kingdom of the legendary Nimrod. Although the precise location has not been found, Accad was most likely near Babylon.

The Sumerian name of the city was Agade. A certain Sargon of Agade (c. 2350 B.C.) founded the city and made it the capital of an early Semitic dynasty. Sargon and his successors (notably his grandson Naram-Sin) were able to control all of the Tigris-Euphrates basin and claimed to have even reached the Mediterranean Sea. The dynasty of Agade lasted for about two centuries and was in fact the first world empire. Evidently the city was then destroyed and not subsequently reoccupied. A Sumerian text from the late 3rd millennium B.C., *The Curse of Agade*, commemorates the city's demise.

The term "Accad" survived after the city was gone. The title "Sumer and Accad" continued to be used for the region of southern Mesopotamia until the late Achaemenid period (4th century B.C.). The language of the Semitic-speaking peoples of Accad is now known as "Accadian." Later peoples of Mesopotamia, including the Assyrians and Babylonians, employed Accadian as the written language of the region. Accadian texts have been discovered dating as late as the 1st century A.D.



"Cursed be Canaan!

The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers."

²⁶He also said,

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem!
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

²⁷May God extend Japheth's^a territory;
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth."

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹Noah lived a total of 950 years, and then he died.

The Table of Nations

10 ¹This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.

The Japhethites

²The sons^b of Japheth:

Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.

³The sons of Gomer:

Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

^a ²⁷ Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for *extend*. ^b ² Sons may mean *descendants* or *successors* or *nations*; also in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, 20-23, 29 and 31. ^c ⁴ Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:7); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Dodanites*


⁴The sons of Javan:

Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the Rodanites.^c ⁵(From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)

The Hamites

⁶The sons of Ham:

Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

TIME CAPSULE		3000 to 2500 B.C.
3000–2000		Early Bronze Age
3000		Menes unites Lower and Upper Egypt to found Egypt's First Dynasty
3000		Pottery is made on a wheel, Palestine
2900		Egyptians adopt a civil calendar of 365 days per year
2750		First stage of Stonehenge monument, Britain
2700–2160		The Old Kingdom in Egypt
2650		Step Pyramid of Djoser, the oldest building of cut stone
2600		Gilgamesh, a legendary king of Uruk
2550		The Great Pyramid at Giza, 481 feet high
2500		Alignments of huge stones (megaliths), Carnac, France

THE FIRST MAJOR CITY (Ge 10:10)

Uruk was a Sumerian city on the Euphrates River in ancient Mesopotamia. Although the name “Uruk” is cited only in Ge 10:10 and Ezr 4:9, its historical importance far exceeds its scant mention in the Bible. Uruk played a role in the origin of urbanization, as well as being one of the great religious centers of Mesopotamia.

Archaeological investigations have confirmed that the Ubaidian people, early inhabitants of Sumer, founded two villages in this area before 4000 B.C. By 3700 B.C. the two centers fused together to create Uruk, the first urban site in world history.

The first evidence of public architecture, cylinder seals, and the origins of writing come from this city. Building projects at Uruk included the earliest known ziggurat, a holy mound at the top of which was the White Temple. Cylinder seals, which were used to mark ownership, spread from Uruk throughout the ancient world. Picture writing (dated to about 3200 B.C.) expressed ideas through a series of pictures. This writing would later evolve into the script known as cuneiform, used first by the Sumerians, early inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

Religion was prominent in Uruk. An, the chief deity, was the head of the Sumerian pantheon of gods. Inanna, the goddess of love, was believed to bring fertility and prosperity to Sumer through her marriage to the god Dumuzi. The exploits of Gilgamesh, a legendary king of Uruk (c. 2600 B.C.), in search of immortality, mention many of the Sumerian gods and goddesses.

Later in the 4th millennium the population of Uruk began to expand their culture, controlling major trade routes and the surrounding regions economically. It is not clear whether this also resulted in political domination. However, Uruk is the second city named in the Sumerian King List, a document that traces the succession of cities which ruled Sumer after the flood.

Uruk had a long history, existing until Hellenistic times (the end of the 1st millennium B.C.). Its longevity is apparent from the two occurrences of Uruk in the Bible. It is mentioned very early as part of Nimrod’s post-Flood kingdom (Ge 10:8–10). Much later in time it is one of the cities and nations writing against Jerusalem during the reign of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.; Ezr 4:9).

⁷The sons of Cush:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteka.

The sons of Raamah:

Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was the father^a of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in^b Shinar.^c ¹¹From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir,^d Calah¹² and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah — which is the great city.

¹³Egypt was the father of

the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphthuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphortorites.

¹⁵Canaan was the father of

Sidon his firstborn,^e and of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite clans scattered ¹⁹and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha.

²⁰These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

The Semites

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was^f Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

²²The sons of Shem:

Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

²³The sons of Aram:

Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek.^g

^a 8 Father may mean ancestor or predecessor or founder; also in verses 13, 15, 24 and 26. ^b 10 Or Uruk and Akkad — all of them in ^c 10 That is, Babylonia ^d 11 Or Nineveh with its city squares ^e 15 Or of the Sidonians, the foremost ^f 21 Or Shem, the older brother of ^g 23 See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:17; Hebrew Mash.

TIME CAPSULE



2500 to 2400 B.C.

2500 Earliest surviving dam, in Egypt, 272 feet thick

2500 Stone temples built at Ggantija, Malta

2500 Egyptians use the sistrum, a metal percussion instrument

2500 Widespread use of axes with sockets for the handle

2450 Smelted iron from Mesopotamia

2450 Egyptians make copper pipes

2400 Egyptians use oars to propel large boats

2400–2250 Ebla, a Semitic city-state in northern Syria

- ²⁴ Arphaxad was the father of^a Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber.
- ²⁵ Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg,^b because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan.
- ²⁶ Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba,²⁹ Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.
- ³⁰ The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.
- ³¹ These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.
- ³² These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

^a 24 Hebrew; Septuagint father of Cainan, and Cainan was the father of ^b 25 Peleg means division. ^c 2 Or from the east; or in the east ^d 2 That is, Babylonia ^e 9 That is, Babylon; Babel sounds like the Hebrew for confused.

The Tower of Babel

11 ¹Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ²As people moved eastward,^c they found a plain in Shinar^d and settled there.

³They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴Then 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."

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why it was called Babel^e — because there the LORD confused the language of

BABEL AND ITS TOWER (GE 11:1-9)

Babel was one of the chief cities in Nimrod's kingdom (Ge 10:8-10). The term "Babel" is the Hebrew form of the name "Babylon," the city on the Euphrates River in central Mesopotamia.

The city has a very ancient past. It is first mentioned by the Accadian king Sargon (c. 2350 B.C.), who, according to tradition, burned it. Shar-kali-sharri (c. 2200 B.C.) restored its temple tower. Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.), a king of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon, made it his capital city. Unfortunately, archaeologists have been able to find evidence only as far back as the period of the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605 B.C. and later). The rising water table in the area has prevented much research into earlier periods.

Babel has received much attention over its tower (Ge 11:4, 5). It likely was a staged temple tower, the distinctive Mesopotamian structure known by the Sumerian term "ziggurat." Ziggurats were developed in the 3rd millennium B.C. at Uruk and Ur in Babylonia, as well as at Nineveh, and consisted of smaller and smaller stages or stories built on top of each other.

Those who believe the tower at Babel refers to temple ruins from Mesopotamia point especially to Etemenanki, the ziggurat of the Marduk temple in Babylon. A Babylonian text describes it as having a base of 295 feet square with seven platforms over 108 feet high. The top platform had a temple where the god met with humanity. Access was achieved by ramps or stairways.

In Genesis the tower was never completed (Ge 11:8). The Etemenanki did not fare much better. It was repaired by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.), severely damaged in the Assyrian civil war (652-648 B.C.), restored again by Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 B.C.), but destroyed by the Persian king Xerxes I in 472 B.C. Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) cleared the area to rebuild it, but died prematurely.



THE MILLENNIUMS

A millennium is a period of 1,000 years. Scholars of ancient history often refer to millenniums (or millennia) when speaking of time before the Common Era or Christian Era (before the year A.D. 1). The setting of the Old Testament books from the patriarchs through the prophet Malachi extends from the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. through most of the 1st millennium.

Millennium Designation	Range of Dates
3rd millennium B.C.	3000 to 2000 B.C.
2nd millennium B.C.	2000 to 1000 B.C.
1st millennium B.C.	1000 to 1 B.C.

the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

From Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem's family line.

Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father^a of Arphaxad. ¹¹And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.^b

¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. ²¹And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. ²³And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Abram's Family

²⁷This is the account of Terah's family line.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. ³⁰Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there.

³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

^a 10 *Father* may mean *ancestor*; also in verses 11-25.

^b 12,13 Hebrew; Septuagint (see also Luke 3:35, 36 and note at Gen. 10:24) 35 years, he became the father of Cainan. ¹³And after he became the father of Cainan, Arphaxad lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan had lived 130 years, he became the father of Shelah. And after he became the father of Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and had other sons and daughters