

## INTRODUCTION to the PENTATEUCH

Just five books make up one of the three major sections of the OT Scriptures. On the relation of the Torah to the rest of the OT, Jesus casts a sharper relief by implying that there was a two-fold division of the OT: the law and the prophets (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27). The Torah was foundational for all the other inspired writings that should follow.

“The first five books of the Bible lay the foundation for the coming of [Messiah] in that God here effects the election (Gen.), redemption (Ex.), sanctification (Lev.), direction (Num.), and the instruction (Deut.) of the Jewish people through whom He will bring into the world its two most treasured gifts, the Living Word (Christ) and the Written Word (Scripture). It is the foundation for this task which is laid by God in the first five books of the Old Testament.” NLG/APSOT

### Popular Summation of the Books of the Torah

Genesis =	plan of God
Exodus =	redemptive power of God
Leviticus =	person of God
Numbers =	providence of God/proving God
Deuteronomy =	principles of God

The over-arching structural THEME of the Pentateuch is the Covenant which God establishes between Himself and His people. Keeping in mind the first audience of the Pentateuch, the focal expression of this covenant is the Sinaitic Covenant which grows out of the promises made to Abraham. Hence, the content of Exodus through Deuteronomy.

Still, the covenant with Abraham is foundational to our understanding of God’s relationship to fallen man; and behind this covenant is the original relationship with its promises and threats that was made with Adam. Sailhamer notes,

“The author of the Pentateuch wants to draw a connecting link between God’s original plan of blessing for mankind and his establishment of the covenant with Israel at Sinai....

“The outlook of the Pentateuch, then, might be described as ‘eschatological,’ for it looks to the future as the time when God’s faithful promise (blessing) would be fulfilled. The past, Mt. Sinai, had ended in failure from the author’s perspective. The message of the Pentateuch, however, is hope: God’s people should trust and obey him and, like Abraham, have faith in his promises.

“...the Pentateuch is a document that looks at the Sinai covenant as an object under consideration. It was attempting to evaluate the Sinai covenant from a perspective that was not the same as that of the covenant itself. Like the other historical books of the OT, the Prophets, and the NT, the Pentateuch represents a look back at the failure of Sinai and a look forward to a time of fulfillment (e.g., Deut 30.)” (Sailhamer, *EBC*, pp. 12,13)

The gracious Covenant of God, then, is God’s way of leading His people to the New Creation: note the imagery at the end of the canon.

Incidental evidence of the eschatological nature of the Torah’s message is found at what Sailhamer calls three major “poetic seams” of the Torah’s macrostructure. After a major narrative section (Jacob, Balaam, Moses; Gen. 49:1, Num. 24:14, Dt. 31:28), a climactic poetic section follows revealing “the presence of homogeneous compositional stratum. It is most noticeably marked by the recurrence of the same terminology and narrative motifs. In each of the three sections, the central narrative figure calls an audience together and proclaims what will happen in ‘the end of days.’” (Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, p. 36

Read further in *The Pentateuch as Narrative* to see the Torah, not as five books, but as one, with one unified design.

## GENESIS

GENESIS is the revelation of ORIGINS of creation, of mankind, of sin and evil, of history, and of sacred history. As a subtle theological statement, God is simply presupposed as the book opens.

The SCOPE of the book spans the beginning of the known created universe to the gathering together of a chosen people in covenant with God who would be custodians of His truth before a corrupted world.

Within this scope of the author, many themes are by-passed. Acc. to Sailhamer, attention is primarily given to God, man, and the land.

The AUTHOR according to strong Jewish tradition and the NT witness (Mt. 19:8; Lk. 16:29; 24:27,44) is Moses. He was highly educated (Acts 7:22) as part of the aristocracy of the most advanced middle eastern kingdom of that day. Contrary to early 20th century gainsayers, Moses knew how to write words, as did his regional forbears a millennium earlier.

The PURPOSE of Genesis is to give the captive children of Israel (in Egypt) an understanding of their God and how they were related to Him.

The STRUCTURE of Genesis is two similar sets of five “generations” or “those things begotten/produced.” “From the earth Adam will come forward. From Adam Abraham and his progeny will emerge. Eventually, out of Abraham Jesus Christ will emerge [Mt. 1:1]” (Hamilton, p. 18).

“The narratives within the Book of Genesis appear to be largely made up of small, self-contained stories worked together into larger units by means of various geographical and genealogical tables.” (Sailhamer, *EBC*, p 4.)

### I. Genesis Outline (based on literary structure)

#### A. Introduction 1:1-2:3

#### B. The PRIMEVAL Generations 2:4-11:26

1. The generations of heaven and earth
2. The generations of Adam 5:1-6:8
3. The generations of Noah 6:9-9:29
4. The generations of the Sons of Noah 10:1-11:9
5. The generations of Shem 11:10-26

#### C. The PATRIARCHAL Generations 11:27-50:26

1. The generations of Terah 11:27-25:11
2. The generations of Ishmael 25:12-18
3. The generations of Isaac 25:19-35:29
4. The generations of Esau 36:1-37:1
5. The generations of Jacob 37:2-50:25

## II. Genesis 1-11: Origin of the Nations

How does this introductory section relate to the bulk of the book of Genesis?

It is the backdrop to God's special dealings with His people through the Abrahamic Covenant which is the substance of Genesis. It is the introduction which tells where man came from, how he was originally related to his Creator and the rest of creation, his fall from God's design, God's promise to preserve life (Noahic covenant), and mankind's abuse of God's grace (tower of Babel).

### A. Creation - chpts 1,2

1. Two accounts of creation: 1) Gen. 1-2:4 and 2) Gen. 2:5-25

As you will find in Archer's introduction, most critics claim these two parts to be written by two authors, mainly because a different name for God is used in each part. Jesus, however, identifies the two accounts together:

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 5 "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? –Mt. 19:4,5

The difference in Moses' perspective has to do firstly, with **Emphases**: Elohim (chpt 1) is typically the term for God as Creator. As Yaweh (chpt 2) God reveals Himself as the personal God of covenant (Gen. 12:1; Ex. 3:15), although Yaweh is identified as the Creator God, Elohim (Ps. 96:5).

secondly, with Moses' **focus**: chpt 1 is the big picture of creation while in chpt 2 the spotlight is on man, the crown of creation (e.g., U.S. map vs. WA state map).

2. Trinitarian involvement in creation

Father = Source, Originator of purpose (I Cor. 8:6a)

Son = Active Agent, Executor (I Cor. 8:6b; John 1:3,10; Heb. 1:2)

H.S. = Preserver (Gen. 1:2; 2:7)

Note parallels between Gen. 1 and John 1: language, imagery (light, life).

3. "In the beginning"

In the Hebrew text this phrase generally denotes a specific starting point, e.g., "the beginning of the year" (Dt. 11:12). This phrase commences the history of God with His people, but also anticipates the consummation of that time which was begun. "Already in Gn 1:1 the concept of the 'last days' fills the mind of the reader," (Procksch in Sailhamer, p. 20).

**Creation *ex nihilo*** is not demanded by the Hebrew verbs here, but is taught in Heb. 11:3, Col. 1:16, and implied by the word "beginning" here, as well as in the knowledge of creation of heaven at the same time (Ex. 20:11).

The main word for create, *bara'*, is always used in the Bible with God as the Subject. In the creation context, it is used interchangeably with *asah*, "to form, to make." In Gen

1:27,28 *Bara'* apparently is used in deliberate assonance with *barak* ("bless"): "God created ... and He crowned/blest."

The word for God's preserving action in creation, "moved, brooded, hovered," is repeated at the end of the Pent. in Dt. 32:11. The picture in Gen. 1:2 probably is not so much the hovering of a dove over the water, as an eagle hovering in protection over its young in the nest (Sailhamer). Later in another key Pent. narrative, we will see the spirit guiding the work of the development of the tabernacle (Ex. 31:3-5).

Even in Creation, God reveals Himself in Redemptive Action as implied by His bringing order out of a formless and empty (*tohu webohu*) Chaos (1:2). See O. Palmer Robertson (*Christ of the Covenants*) on the covenant of creation.

God intends blessing, and thus replaces the formlessness of *tohu* with ordered creation that is *tov*, "good." A synonym to *tohu* later in the Pent. (Dt. 32:10) is *midbar*, "wilderness," out of which God gives deliverance and brings order to the Hebrew society. (See Sailhamer, *EBC*, p. 24).

Later, the prophets and apostles will remember the creation acct in their description of the dawn of a new age (Is. 8:22-9:2; Mt. 4:13-17; Jn. 1:5,8,9).

Significantly, the four major categories of physics are displayed in the opening verse of the Bible: time, space, substance, and causality.

#### 4. Competing interpretations on the time spans of Creation due to the apparent age of the earth and universe.

Variations of meaning of the word "day" in Genesis 1 & 2:

- "day-time" (12 hours) (1:5,14,16,18; 8:22)
- calendar day (24 hours) (1:5; Ex. 20:8-11)
- indefinite era (2:4; Lev. 14:2,9,10)

##### a. **Literal 24 hour days**

- (1) When used with numbers, "day" is calendar sense
- (2) "Day" in the plural (Ex. 20:11) is uniformly literal in the OT (700+X)
- (3) "Evening and morning" describes literal days (cf. Dan. 8:14, ASV)
- (4) Application of 4th commandment, Exodus 20:11
- (5) Adam and Eve evidently lived through the seventh day
- (6) Necessary interrelation (e.g., horticultural) between days
- (7) The Bible describes mankind as present from the foundation of the world (Acts 3:21; Romans 1:20; I John 3:8; Lk. 1:69,70; 11:50; Mark 10:6; 13:19)

A variation on this interpretation is John Sailhamer's "Historical Creationism" view. He

believes (*Genesis Unbound*, 1996) that Gen. 1:1 involved the creation of the universe and spirit world, perhaps over eons. The promised *land/garden* of Eden was then later fashioned for mankind in six literal days.

b. **Day-Age theory:** each day = an eon of time starting as far back as 4,500,000,000 years ago (per Rich Deem of GodandScience.org)

Loose Day-agers believe that God guided evolution (“theistic evolution”) to form and fill the world

Conservative “day-agers” as are found in the “Reasons to Believe” organization reject the process of theistic evolution. One member of RTB, Rich Deem at “GodandScience.org,” does hold to “micro-evolution” at the plant and lower life levels where God is said to be shaping instead of “creating” (bara’): “Therefore, contrary to what many Christians teach, the Bible seems to allow for naturalistic speciation of certain kinds of organisms. How much speciation would be allowable according to the biblical account is up to debate. However, the Bible clearly indicates that God directly intervened in the creation of certain groups of organisms (the higher mammals, birds and mankind).” (<http://www.godandscience.org/evolution/biblevol.html>)

c. **Intermittent day:** God creates on 6 single days, but with great spans of time between His creation activity.

d. **Gap theory:** (Old Scofield Bible) Gen. 1:1 describes an initial aborted creation with a pre-Adamic race; Satan fell during this period before God went back to the drawing board and refashioned His creation in Gen. 1:2ff.

However, Ex. 20:11 indicates a complete, one time creation, and the fact that God saw His creation as very good (1:31) implies that corruption had not yet entered.

e. **Pictorial day:** the seven days are in reference to the calendar days in which the story of creation was revealed to Moses while in a trance; viz., he got a different snapshot of creation on seven successive days. This theory is based largely on the literary form of the creation account: the first three days parallel the last three days in content.

f. **Framework hypothesis:** the poetic shape of the creation days focuses more on the result than on the process of creation. The days do not have to be literal days, nor do the events have to take place in the order listed.

## 5. Six days of creation

a. These six days God calls “good;” the seventh day He calls “holy” (Gen. 2:3; Is. 58:13).

God sanctifies the silence of the seventh day after He finishes speaking on six days; it is reflective of God's solitude before creation. On this day He neither speaks nor works; He simply blesses on this day.

- b. Note the order and symmetry of content between the first three days and the last three.

The first three days may be summarized as creation acts giving form and distinction (separation) to the **formless** (*tohu*), and the last three creation days as filling what was **empty** (*bohu*).

"The characteristic verbs that tie together days 1-3 are *separate* and *gather* verbs of formation while the verbs that unite days 4-6 are *teem* and *fill* and *be fruitful* and *increase* verbs of filling" (Youngblood, p. 26). Later in the key Exodus passage, Moses focuses again upon the dividing of the waters with dry land: this miracle shows again the creative power of God.

God does not say anything about day 2 being "good." Goodness seems to devolve upon what God views as good for man; here "the land" is not yet in view.

#### FORMING

- day 1** = light  
(separating light and darkness)  
**day 2** = firmament  
(separating upper and lower waters)  
**day 3** = dry land; vegetation  
(separating lower waters from earth)

#### FILLING

- day 4** = sun and moon  
(separating day and night)  
**day 5** = sea and sky creatures  
**day 6** = land creatures/man

### 6. God as God

God is:

- Before creation (anti-materialism -> matter not eternal)
- Before evil (anti-dualism/chance)
- Separate from creation (anti-pantheism)
- Presupposed as one God without consort

### 7. "Eden"

Scholars believe the description of the garden deliberately foreshadows the tabernacle (Ex. 25-27) where man could walk with God.

Etymologists used to understand "Eden" as meaning "plain" or "step," from the Sumerian, *edin*. The 1979 Syrian discovery of the Tell Fakhariyah inscription has possibly shed new light on the meaning of Eden.

Probably from the IX century, this life-size statue of the ruler of Gozan (II Kgs. 19:12; 17:6; 18:11) is inscribed in both Assyrian cuneiform and in early Aramaic. The Aramaic translation is the largest and oldest extant Aramaic record.

An Aramaic participle based on "eden" was a translation of the Assyrian, "make abundant, cause to flourish." It is used in the context of watering places and rivers (cf. Gen.

2:6), and implies a luxuriant place of fruitfulness.

For further development as well as a commentary on the Genesis words for “image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26), see R.S. Hess, “Eden A Well-watered Place,” in *Bible Review*, Dec. 1991.

## 8. Man: the crown of creation (Ps. 8:5ff.)

### a. Image of God

“God created man male and female, after his own image (1:26,27), in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Eph. 4:24; Col 3:10), with dominion over the creatures.”

–Westminster S.C., Question 10

This image of God in man as opposed to most other creatures implies self-consciousness, moral discernment, capacity for worship, and immortality. Sailhamer makes a good case of the image of God implying knowledge between good and evil (pp. 45,46).

The creation of the animals is viewed objectively from the third person: “God made...” But in the creation of His masterpiece, the perspective turns to first person: “Let us make....” The animals were “created after their kind,” but “man was created male and female in the image of God.”

### b. “Cultural Mandate” in 1:28

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

<sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Note the command given to God’s kingdom agent in 1:26-28, sometimes called the “cultural mandate.” It was muted by the rebellion (ctr. 9:7). Though the mandate still seems incumbent upon mankind (Ps. 8:4-8), it will be ultimately fulfilled by the perfect Man (Heb. 2:8; Phil. 3:20,21) in the kingdom (Is. 11:6-9; Rom 8:20-22).

**Phil 3:20-21** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

### c. Woman

A relatively extensive amount of the creation story is given over to the formation and place of “woman” (AS < *wif mann*: “female human”), unlike any other ancient creation story (cf. **Enuma Elish** = “When On High,” a creation account that is more theological than anthropological). Of interest is the Sumerian word for “rib” which also means “life;” cf. Eve’s name.

She is designated Adam’s “helper,” a term that is usually applied to God in the OT (Ps 10:14; 30:10; 54:4; Heb 13:6). A “Helper” generally was “stronger than the one who stands in need” (Psa 54:4 “God is my Helper”; Hamilton, p. 29). Woman’s subordination is associated with the context of the Fall (3:16; I Tim. 2).

Sailhamer finds a literary play on the woman being a “helper” *‘ezer*, and her role in bringing forth seed, *zera`* (p. 46).

## 9. The age of the earth

Many conservative theologians recognize that there are gaps in the genealogies of the OT and NT, thus making it more difficult to specifically pinpoint the age of the race from Adam's time. An estimate of 10,000 to 100,000 years is the conservative figure. The apparent antiquity of the earth is explained either by the effects of catastrophism (the flood), or that God created the earth in mature form, even as He created Adam with his permanent teeth in.

(Luke 3:35,36, cf. Gen. 10:24)

## 10. Divine Creation Arguments from General Revelation

**Archaeology:** out of the thousands of times that the spade has unearthed some past history, it has always confirmed the biblical record.

**Astronomy** “agrees with Genesis that the world had a beginning.”

**Geology** “supports the order of creation presented in Genesis 1...”

**Physics**, especially the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, shows that the world is running out of available energy, implying that matter (creation) is not eternal. It also throws a monkey wrench into evolution that theorizes nature is always improving on itself, while this law of nature says that things tend to deteriorate on their own. (=Entropy)

**Mathematics** “(the law of probability) shows that the world did not happen by chance but was designed by an intelligent power.”

**Biology** “teaches that each creature reproduces [after] its own kind.”

**Anthropology** shows that there is only one race of mankind (cf. Acts 17:26) with different ethnic groupings within it. This indicates a common ancestor for all men.” NLG/APSOT

## B. The Fall of Man, chpt 3

All thru Gen. 1 God is depicted as “seeing” and “knowing” what was good. He knew what was good for man and bestowed blessings of goodness. Here, man is depicted as not content to trust God for everything that was good for man. (The woman “saw” that the tree was “good” for food....) Man chooses to decide independently what is good and what is evil.

Ironically, this becomes his folly, for though he now knows evil and the darker side in creation, he cannot freely do good or be good apart from his Maker—only God Himself is the source of goodness. In other words, he already knew good from the hand of God; it never occurred to man that now all he would know would be evil.

As Sailhamer notes, “Man, who had been created “like God” in the beginning, found himself after the Fall curiously “like God” but no longer “with God...” now that man is familiar with evil (p. 59).

### 1. Temptation

- a. Terms of the covenant (tree of life, Rev. 2:7, and tree of [death], the latter mentioned in Canaanite religious texts).

These trees are sacramental in that they are ordained of God to convey visibly the promises of life and the threat of death. Note that God will use the tree of Calvary to bring life in the midst of death.

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. –Col 2:13,14

Stott's outline of the covenant terms:

- (1) Permission to eat of the trees
- (2) Prohibition against partaking of one tree
- (3) Penalty for disobedience

b. Three standard appeals in 3:6 of comfort, power, and fame

-I John 2:16

For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world.

-cf. Satan's temptation of Jesus (in order of Luke 4, which immediately appears after the statement that Jesus was the son of Adam in 3:38)

“She saw that it was good” for food, a phrase that up to now has been used only in refr. to God. Created in the image of God, man was already like God; yet in believing the serpent's lie in a fuller search for what is good, man in his folly lost what was good. Goodness comes as God's provision, not thru man's quest. “Like the Preacher of Ecclesiastes, they sought wisdom but found only vanity and toil.” (Sailhamer, 52).

Now with the knowledge of evil, Adam in effect blames God in 3:12 for the good gift of his wife that God had given.

c. “Subtleness” (*`arum*) of the serpent (3:1) is a literary bridge from the preceding verse which employs a similar sounding word for the couple's innocent nakedness (*`arom*). “Subtleness” may imply the prudence of the wise man as in Proverbs, or the crafty shrewdness of the wicked as in Job. Later “shameful nakedness” (*`erom*) is introduced in 3:7 and implies vulnerability to God's judgment (Dt. 28:48). Man's desire for wisdom (*`arum*) in being like God leads to God's curse (*`arur*, vs. 14) on man.

d. Identity of the serpent clear from Rev. 12:3,9; 20:2

2. Federal headship of Adam over the race as our cov't rep.  
(Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:20ff.)

3. Curse and Promise

The voice (*qol*) of God (3:8) calls, expecting obedience (*shema`*) and fellowship. God's cross-examination parallels the courtroom scene in chpt. 4 with Cain.

CURSE = opposite of God's originally intended blessings

a. Serpent (curse on the serpent a possible emblem of curse on nature? Rom. 8:22,23)

b. Woman (cf. I Timothy 2:15)

c. Mankind

“God initiates a means of redemption to reclaim the prodigals. His plan? To place at the respective point of highest self-fulfillment in the life of a woman and a man problems of suffering, misery, and frustration. These sentences are ... gifts of love, strewn in the pathway of man, to bring him back to God” (Hamilton, p. 48).

The more one fights against the sorrow attached by God to one’s natural role, the more the sorrow will be compounded.

BLESSING in 3:15 (blessing of original design, 1:28, not aborted)

- Promised perfect 2nd Adam to stand probation again = “Protevangelium”
- God’s provision through sacrifice: sin prompts God to return to His work (3:21) after having rested. Later, this theme is renewed when God gives instructions for making the priests’ robes to cover their nakedness (Ex. 28:42). This may have something to do with atonement (covering) in order to be able to approach God in fellowship.

4. **Exile** will be a key theme of the Pentateuch.

a. Generally the direction of the dispersion is Eastward (3:24) from God’s presence (here, Cain, Babel, Lot; cf. Babylon the Great).

Curiously, man was like God, but not with God.

b. Cherubim guard the tree of life (3:24), the token of the covenant, as they later will guard the Torah, the token of the covenant within the priestly ark.

C. Cain and Abel, chpts 4,5

1. “Knowledge” is a new key theme -4:1,9

2. The war of the two seeds (see Fishbane’s supplemental chart that shows parallels of chpt. 4 with chpt. 3) culminates early in fratricide—and that in the course of worship.

There was nothing wrong with the form of Cain’s sacrifice as both his and Abel’s were *minchahs*, not necessarily bloody gifts.

4:7 - “sin is crouching” cf. Akkadian demon called “croucher” depicted as lurking outside an entrance. An alternative interpretation: a “sin offering” is available at the door of the garden.

3. Cain is exiled from the protective community as his parents had been. His “New Beginning” (Enoch) ends in death (4:17); ctr. Seth’s son’s name, Enosh, (“frail one”).

Cain’s urbanization seems to be a prototype of the later cities of refuge (Dt. 19:11) against the avenger of blood (4:14). Sailhamer even believes that the building of his city may have been “the sign” which marked Cain (*EBC*, p. 68).

4. Generation of Adam as physical DEATH takes hold (5)

- a. Blessing (v.2) is associated with filling the earth (1:28)

- b. 10 generation genealogy; cf. Sumerian king list in divisions of 10

“Gaps in genealogies are not uncommon. The genealogy in Gen 11 shows evidence of gaps. Moses’ ancestors in Ex. 6:16-20 must skip generations; otherwise Moses would have had 8,600 male cousins (Num. 3:27-28)! The fact that Exodus 2 does not mention the names of his parents confirms this understanding. The well-known list of the kings of Judah in the genealogy of Jesus skips Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah when it says, ‘Joram begat Uzziah’” (Matt. 1:8). JAB FTS Notes, p. 15.

- c. Fatherhood of God is depicted in Adam’s bearing sons in his own likeness (note Lk. 3:38.) Cf. climax of Pent. in Dt. 32:6b; Dt. 8:5 (and Gen. 6) implies “sons of God.”

- d. Note emphasis on inescapable curse of death, except in case of Enoch who breaks the cycle because of his obedience and fellowship with his Maker. To “walk with God” (5:24) is to fulfill one’s covenant obligations (17:1,2). This phrase is used of Noah (6:9) and Isaac as well as for Abraham. God had walked with Adam in the garden.

#### D. The Flood (6-9)

##### 1. Corruption of the race

- a. 6:3 Note here that Moses lived 120 years.

- b. Conditions appear (6:5) to be returning to disordered chaos of 1:2; 6:11: “...the earth was *filled* with violence.” What God had seen as “good” now is corrupted and is seen as only evil.

Violence and illicit sexual relationships frame the introduction and conclusion of this narrative (chpts. 6-9). The conclusion shows the continuing curse after the new beginning and the need for God’s covenant and His law. (See Forrest, “Paradise Lost Again,” *JSOT* 1994, 62:3-18.)

- c. *Nephilim* (6:4)

= literally, “fallen ones”

LXX translates *gigantes*; cf. Num. 13:33

- d. See supplemental chart on identity of “sons of God” (v.2); the godly line of Seth is the

interpretation that best fits the theme of Genesis plus the preceding context. It addresses the problem of the godly seed intermingling with the wicked line of Cain.

Sailhamer (p. 78) says that these are idiomatic phrases that mirror creation design: man came from God, and woman came out of man.

2. Noah: the second Adam to give “rest” (*Noach*) Gen. 5:29 cf. 2:15
  - a. A “Preacher of Righteousness” who said more than “God has a wonderful plan for your life”  
(II Pet. 2:5 cf. John 16:8; I Pet. 3:20; Heb. 11:7; John 15:19)
  - b. God’s gracious covenant of deliverance to preserve the entire race over-arches Noah’s immediate family (6:18)
3. The Ark preserves God’s people (the only other use of the word is in Ex. 2:3,5, where it is also coated with pitch)

Significantly, the building of the ark parallels the building of the tabernacle in Ex. 25ff. (Sailhamer, *EBC* 82ff.). The tabernacle and Noah’s ark have parallels to the Garden of Eden: 1) design is from God, 2) man meets here with God, 3) sanctuary/refuge.

The **dimensions** (6:15) were quite seaworthy at 450’ X 75’ X 45’, (6:1 length/width ratio) as opposed to the preposterous cube of the Gilgamesh Epic. Modern ships have a length/width ratio of about 8:1, and some tankers 7:1; some slower ships in the last century were 6:1 like the ark. The length of the ark was not exceeded in shipping until 1858.

“A great deal of discussion has centered around the capacity of the ark to hold all the types of animals in the world. Actually, the ark was very large. ...its gross tonnage was over 15,000 tons. It would have held as much as 567 railroad boxcars, and all the present species of land animals could fit comfortably into 150 boxcars.” —JAB Notes

Other estimates put the volume at 522 RR stock cars; only 146 cars would be necessary to haul 35,000 animals; 50,000 would be the maximum number of animals. There were at least three decks, giving the floor space of 95,000 square feet.

The average land animal size is that of a sheep. Younger smaller animals may have been brought to the ark.

4. World conditions revert to primeval creation time of 1:2 (“unformed and unfilled,” and water everywhere).

Walter Brown’s *In the Beginning* has a helpful technical explanation on the forces creating the flood and shaping the ensuing world. He credits a lot to the waters under the earth, saying they were more than above the firmament. When super-heated waters under the earth’s crust ruptured the crust under the ocean, a geyser of steam followed by a fountain of water shot into the upper atmosphere, releasing the upper waters. The resulting weakening of the earth’s skin led to the Mid-Oceanic Ridge, troughs, and continental shifting.

- a. Unformed - 7:10-20

b. Unfilled - 7:21-24 (as opposed to the world “filled with violence,” 6:11)

The fresh start parallels the order of creation (8:1,2,5,6ff.,17; 9:1,2,3):

- Wind/breath (1:2 cf. 8:1)
- Waters above and below separated (1:6-8 cf. 8:2)
- Land (1:9,10 cf. 8:5)
- Birds (1:20 cf. 8:6ff.)
- Animals come forth (1:25 cf. 8:17)
- Filling the renewed world (1:28 cf. 8:13-19ff.; 9:1)
- Authority over natural world (1:28 cf. 9:2)
- Food provisions (1:30 cf. 9:3)

#### 5. A Universal, not local, Flood

- a. Flood covered the highest hills (7:19-20); Ararat now 17,000 feet
- b. Duration of the voyage was about a year before waters subsided
- c. The Size of the ark was large enough for all the animals from the world, not just Mesopotamia.
- d. **Why use an ark at all if one could run to dry ground?**
- e. Testimony of II Pet. 3:3-7 “world that perished”
- f. Would not some men survive a regional flood? could they claim the promise of the rainbow covenant?
- g. The rainbow is a universal sign
- h. Analogy of the universal judgment by fire at the end of age

#### 6. Universal Flood accounts

Babylonian Flood account = **Gilgamesh Epic**

SIMILARITIES: Ark (120 cubits cubed), destruction of earth, raven + dove + swallow, mountain landing, final sacrifice

CONTRASTS: no mention of motive for flood being judgment of sin

#### 7. Geological impact of the flood

a. Catastrophism (II Peter 3:6 in Greek; cf. II Pet. 2:6) vs. uniformitarianism (II Peter 3:4)

2 Peter 3:6 <sup>6</sup> by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.  
δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὑδατι κατακλυσθεῖς ἀπώλετο

uniform geophysical process rates are acknowledged as fixed after the flood, 8:22

b. Continental changes: Psalm 104:6-9 in Hebrew; cf. eschatological parallels of Is. 40:4 and

Zech. 14:10

Psalm 104:6-9 (ESV) <sup>6</sup>You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. <sup>7</sup>At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. <sup>8</sup>The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. <sup>9</sup>You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

- c. Climatic changes (“seasons” in 8:22) different from the mist of 2:6; cf. Zech. 14:6,7. Joseph Dillow, *The Waters Above: the Earth’s Pre-flood Vapor Canopy*, believes that there were seismic convulsions which broke open the fountains of the deep and which precipitated the condensation of the mist through the volcanic ash being spewed out world-wide.

(1) This would explain how woolly mammoths could be foraging for buttercups in Siberia and Alaska at one moment and be instantaneously quick-frozen the next, and how there could be coal and petrified wood at the southern polar cap.

(2) Cf. Krakatoa (1883)

E. Noahic Covenant (chpt. 9): Government of law and order

W.J. Dumbrell makes a good case that the Noahic Covenant was the perpetuation of an already existing covenant (*Covenant and Creation*, pp. 16-26). The term is not to “cut a covenant,” (*karath berith*), but to “establish a covenant,” (*heqim berith*) (6:18; 9:9,13).

The conclusion is that this is the ratification of the creation covenant made with Adam.

1. Essence: **preservation** of the race in the face of corruption and violence so that the plan of redemption can be consummated

- a. No more extermination of the race by water  
b. Protection of innocent human life

2. Capital punishment

- a. Sacredness of human life in the image of God  
b. Reaffirmed in the NT (Rom. 13:4; Acts 25:11)

"For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying" A. 25:11

3. Deliverance came out of judgment as an east wind dried up the waters. Compare similar theme in Ex. 14:21 where God provides dry ground in the midst of chaos.

An altar restores fellowship with God here and at Sinai (Sailhamer, 93)

4. Covenant sign: universal rainbow, 9:13; comparative word study shows that the main use of “bow” is “war bow” (cf. 48:22), even as in this context with the idea that God has retired his offensive activity; “hanging of such a bow in the sky was a divine declaration of

peace” (Dumbrell, p.29).

For other biblical rainbow refs., see Rev. 4:3 (ctr. Rev. 20:11). Also note God’s appearance in a cloud of glory at the establishment of the Mosaic covenant.

#### 5. Curse on Canaan, 9:20-27

Significantly, corruption (cf. 6:12) and a curse enter the picture early after the new beginning. There are deliberate parallels to Gen. 3 showing the corruptibility of man (Noah serves as the next Adam) in the recreation: abuse of the fruit of the field after an orchard is planted; knowledge of nakedness; subsequent curse.

The term for Noah’s nakedness is *erwah*, meaning “shameful nakedness,” often implying immoral behavior. A different word is used for simple nakedness, “baredness.”

Ham seemed to delight (“he gazed”) in the embarrassment of his normally upright father (9:22); but Canaan appears to be culpable in this episode. His offense may have been against a pre-Mosaic understanding of the Torah’s proscription in Lev. 18:7 and Deut. 27:20:

Deuteronomy 27:20 'Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.'

Leviticus 18:7 'The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness.'

There was no curse (or blessing) on Ham.

The curse of v. 25 is partially realized when the Gibeonite children of Canaan are cursed:

Joshua 9:23 "Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves -- woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

#### F. Modern Human Origins chpt. 10

This chapter catalogs the response to God’s command to fill the earth. Many names are those of individuals, others are of nations (v. 10).

There are exactly 70 nations in the genealogy. Moses carefully paints Abraham, the father of many nations, as the second Adam and his posterity as the new humanity by highlighting the fact that Abe’s seed numbered 70: Gen. 46:27, Ex. 1:5). Cf. Rom. 4:16.

For a correlation of modern anthropology with this ancient record, see Speiser in *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, “Man, Ethnic Divisions of.”

According to Sam Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks*, (p.17),

**Japheth** was the progenitor of the Indo-Europeans

**Ham**’s descendants settled in Africa and then spread northward into Palestine and Mesopotamia (Akkad).

**Shem** settled north of the Persian Gulf area (Elam) and spread into Mesopotamia:

Ashur and Aram.

—Eber (10:24, 11:16,17, apparent father of “Hebrews”) was the progenitor of Peleg, (“separation” 10:32) and of Abraham who landed in the promised land, while Peleg’s brother, Joktan, was involved in resisting God at Babel (10:25.) See Sailhamer, 102.

Dorsey (*Literary Structures of the OT*, p. 53) notes that Eber is the 14<sup>th</sup> generation from Adam, Abraham is the 21<sup>st</sup> from Adam. In Matthew’s genealogy, Jesus is the 21<sup>st</sup> generation from Abraham, place Abraham squarely in the middle of sacred genealogy.

Richard Lanser (“Making Sense of the Days of Peleg” in *Bible and Spade*, Spring 2009, pp. 51ff.), theorizes that “pangaea” (world of one unified continent) was broken apart (“divided”) in the days of Peleg (Gen 10:25) by a celestial catastrophe. This theory puts the physical division of the continents after the scattering of the tribes at Babel.

#### G. Genesis 11, The Tower of Babel: Conspiracy to frustrate God’s designs and live apart from Him; deification of statism

1. Hourglass (Chiastic) literary structure of the account is hinged on v. 5.
2. Tower = probably a ziggurat = a stepped pyramid “reaching into the heavens” (cf. 28:12).
3. “Babel”
  - a. The Akkadian word Babel means “Gateway to God;” compare Jacob’s ladder reaching down from heaven; he called the place “Bethel,” the “Gate to heaven.”

And he was afraid and said, "How awesome *is* this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" –Gen 28:17
  - b. The onomatopoeic word “Babel” sounds enough like the Hebrew *balal*, “to confound, to confuse,” to make a pun on the original intention of Babel.
4. Scattering of the race = Exile
  - a. Purpose: to break up the devilish, universal conspiracy against God’s authority and His plan of redemption (cf. Psalm 2:1-4,12).
  - b. Result:
    - 1) Scattered isolation and increased dependence
    - 2) Providential development of the races through selective mating; no evidence of miraculous generation of new races at the judgment on Babel.
    - 3) Fill the earth

## H. Genealogy of Shem (11:10-26) = transition to Abraham

Parallels the chosen generation of Adam (ch. 5) given after the other generations, and serves as the shortest possible bridge from primeval history to introduce Abram in the Patriarchal section of Genesis.

## EXCURSUS on Ancient EBLA (Tel-Mardikh)

In the hey-day of higher criticism (a skeptical attack of rationalism against the integrity of the Bible) OT rationalist scholars were formulating critical theories in a vacuum of knowledge. For example, it was hard for them to imagine a Moses appearing suddenly on the world scene with a code of laws and institutions. For them 900 b.c. had been the beginning of cultural clock.

The archaeologists' shovel has uncovered many of the facts of history, and in so doing has buried many of the caprices of the critics.

Ancient Ebla, located in northern Syria below ancient Haran, began to be uncovered in 1976. It has proven to be the most important archaeological find since the DSS shook the world in 1948. The discovery of this advanced Semitic culture has pushed the cultural clock back (from 900 b.c.) to as early as 9,000 b.c. Apparently, the city-state of Ebla flourished from 3,500 to its destruction in 2,300 b.c.

We know from Ebla that there was much literary activity going on in that day: business records, diplomatic correspondence and royal records, and other historical and/or legendary stories. Among the thousands of tablets found, there was an account of the flood. Of great significance were

- 1) references to Palestinian **place names**, significantly, Jerusalem, Haran, Megiddo, Gaza, Canaan, and the "five cities of the plain" listed in the same order as listed in the Bible (Gen. 14); Sodom and Gomorah were trading partners with Ebla;
- 2) usage of biblical/Semitic **proper names**, e.g., Israel ("Prince of God"), Michael ("Who is like God?") Ishmael, Abram, Sarah, Keturah, etc; a long-standing King in Ebla was named Eber (cf. Gen. 11:14-6; 14:13); of interest, the kings were elected for four-year terms by family representatives;
- 3) discovery of **names of deity**. There were various temples unearthed in the city, one to Dagon, but two to YAH! One temple name was "House of him who is the door" and another the "House of him who is the word;"
- 4) one business transaction spoke of a shepherd named Abraham from Haran whose wife was named Keturah.

Besides verifying ancient biblical places, the common usage of biblical names, and giving hints about a common Semitic religion, the discovery of the ancient Semitic vocabulary has shed light on

obscure (mainly due to antiquity) words found in the books of Job and Psalms.

Currently, progress on the study of tel-Mardikh has been bottled up by religious and geo-political politics. The Syrians who control the site near modern Aleppo do not want to give any credence to the historicity and integrity of modern Israel.

Sources on the value of Tel-Mardikh, include the *National Geographic* for December 1978, and Kenneth Kitchen's *The Bible in Its World*, "Ebla, the Queen of Ancient Syria."

