# Genesis 1-11

Study Notes

## Before we begin

It is important to note when reading Genesis that the language is very literal. It cannot be taken figurative or allegorically without doing a great disservice to the original Hebrew. The English language captures this literalism very well, so we can rest assured that there are no hidden meanings, or allegories. It is written as a clear and historical record. When it says 7 days, it means 7 days!

The facts presented in Genesis can be difficult for us to defend, or even comprehend when faced with the world’s answer to God in the form of scientific evidence, old earth theory, evolution, rationalism, comparative religion, etc. This is nothing new! From the early days, as we will see, man has sought to disregard what God has said and substitute themselves in his place. They follow in the words of Adam Savage from Mythbusters, who made popular the saying:

I reject your reality and substitute my own!

## Overview

Genesis chapters 1 through 11 provides the answers to some of man’s biggest questions:

* Where did we came from?
* How have we gotten to the state we are in today?
* Will there be relief from sin?

## Key Themes

To answer these questions, Genesis explores for us the following themes:

### Created by God

* The earth was created by God alone  
  *Contrast this to other cultures’ creation myths*
* Man was created by God  
  *Contrast this to evolutionary theory*
* Man was given tasks by God to perform  
  *Contrast this to what man chose to do instead*

### Good versus Evil

* God’s instructions versus the Serpent’s lies
* Abel versus Cain
* The descendants of Seth versus the descendants of Cain
* Man’s disobedience versus Noah’s obedience

### Obedience

* See Hebrews 11:1-7 for more information
* Abel offered his best to God, and God was pleased
* Enoch “walked with the Lord” – he had a close relationship with Him
* Noah obeyed the Lord, and so secured his role as the “heir of righteousness”

## Sin

* Sin is first named in 4:7 – חטּאת (pronounced khat-tawth'). The root word in Hebrew means “to miss the mark”
* Sin is next named in 4:13 – עון (pronounced aw-vone'), where it is often translated punishment/iniquity. The Hebrew root word means “crookedness”
* Sin is personified by God as a wild beast: crouching at the door, waiting for us to give it half a chance to devour us
* The Garden of Eden teaches us where sin comes from, while through Cain and Abel we are taught what sin is: missing the mark that God has set; taking the crooked path rather than the straight; and that it is ready to destroy us if we give it an inlet into our lives

### Relief

* In the Garden of Eden, we are told that the serpent (Satan), will be destroyed by a male descendant of Eve, reliving the world of sin
* Man cries out for relief from the effects sin (Noah’s father Lamech)
* God does provide some temporary relief from sin (the flood)
* God prepares the way for the people through whom the Messiah will be born (Abram)

## Passage Overview

| Verses | Details | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1:1-2:3 | The order of creation | “And God saw that it was good” |
| 2:4-24 | The creation of humankind | A closer look at day six |
| 3:1-24 | Good versus evil: Adam and Eve | Desiring to be like God, disregarding his guidance |
| 4:1-16 | Good versus evil: Cain and Abel | Sin is named for the first time |
| 4:17-25 | The descendants of Cain | Rebellion against God, generation after generation |
| 4:26-5:32 | The descendants of Seth | Obeying God, looking forward to relief from sin |
| 6:1-8 | The wickedness of man | In 120 years, man will be destroyed |
| 6:9-8:19 | The obedience of Noah | His obedience provides temporary relief |
| 8:20-9:7 | Man’s new responsibilities | Man will be punished for his sin |
| 9:9-17 | The covenant with Noah | An unconditional covenant with the earth |
| 10:1-32 | The descendants of Noah | The nations of the world are started |
| 11:1-9 | The Tower of Babel | Man seeks to make themselves like God again |
| 11:10-32 | The ancestry of Abraham | The line that God will use to save humanity |

## Key People

| Name | Notes |
| --- | --- |
| Adam | Name means “man” |
| Eve | Name means “source of life” |
| Cain | First murderer and first city builder. Cursed by God, but still protected by him. |
| Abel | Offered his first fruits, so his offering was accepted by God. Killed by Cain. |
| Seth | Name means “he appointed” (referring to God). A son in Abel’s place for Eve. |
| Lamech | First polygamist, disproportionately vengeful (compare to Cain’s curse) |
| Enoch | Close, personal relationship with God. Did not die. |
| Methuselah | Oldest man (969 years). Died in the flood. |
| Noah | Descendant of Seth. Name means “relief”. Invented wine. |
| Nimrod | “A mighty hunter before the Lord” (hated God). Started the Sumerian empire. |
| Abram | Name means “exalted father”. God changes his name to Abraham “father of many”. |

## Unusual Words

| Word | Meaning/Context |
| --- | --- |
| Babel | Means “confusion”. The word “babble” comes from it. Greek, Latin, Sanskrit all have a similar word. Nebuchadnezzar built a massive ziggurat on its foundation. |
| Gopherwood | The wood the ark was made out of. We do not know what this wood is. |
| Nephilim | Literally “giants”. Could be from intermarriage between the lines of Seth and Cain, or intermarriage between man and angels. |
| Shinar | May mean “Two rivers”. The plains of Babylon, between the Euphrates and Tigris. |

## Noah’s Descendants

