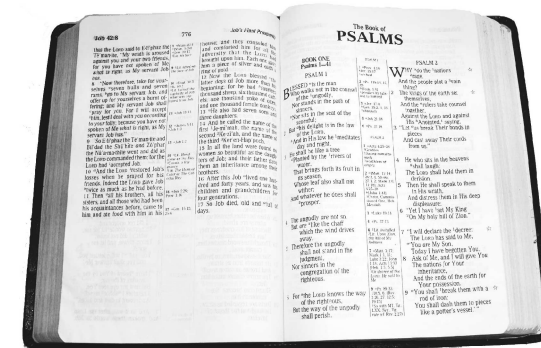


PILGRIM BIBLE NOTES

God's holy Word simply explained and applied



November 2013

Bible readings from Luke chapters 9 and 10
Genesis chapters 1 to 13

Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan

When God called Abram, he told him to leave behind his family and his country, but it seems that Abram could not shake off certain members of the family. He first lost his father through death, and now he separated himself from his nephew, Lot. Both of them had so prospered that there was insufficient pasture land for their livestock and there was contention between their herdsmen. Godly Abram, the senior partner, became the peacemaker and gave Lot first choice of the land (5–9).

Lot could not resist taking the very best of the land, the well-watered, rich and fertile plain of the river Jordan. *Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan ... and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom* (11–12). After Lot had departed, the Lord spoke to Abram and promised that he would give him and his descendants all the land that he could see (including the plain of Jordan). Abram moved his tent to Hebron and built another altar to the Lord (14–18).

We all have choices to make. Do not be like Lot who selfishly opted for material blessings to the detriment of his soul. We shall be seeing just how disastrous that choice was for Lot and his family. Lot chose to go to Sodom where the people *were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD* (13). Satan has ensnared many a Christian with material things so that they have grown lukewarm in their devotion to the Lord. God says elsewhere in his word, *‘Those who honour me I will honour, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed’* (1 Samuel 2:30). **Are you seeking to honour the Lord in all your choices?** Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, *‘But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you’* (Matthew 6:33).

*Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
Lead me by thine own hand,
Choose thou the path for me.*

(Horatius Bonar)

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He went ... to the place of the altar

The Lord was very gracious to Abram. He had failed to trust in God to protect him while he was in Egypt, but he left Egypt as a wealthy man. There is another very important lesson for us in these verses. Abraham *went on his journey from the south as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning ... to the place of the altar ... And there Abram called on the name of the LORD* (3–4). What should we do when we have backslidden and failed the Lord? We must retrace our steps and repent of the sins that have overtaken us. We must go back to where we were at the beginning to make a fresh start, and call on the name of the Lord.

Is the Lord speaking to you? Perhaps you have grown cold in your love for him? Do you recognise that you are a spiritual ‘has-been’ and that this is a terrible and miserable state in which to find yourself? Have you found, like Abram, that when you are not walking with the Lord, things begin to go wrong, even though you may prosper materially? Are the words of this hymn your experience?

*Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?*

*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But now I feel an aching void
The world can never fill.*

(William Cowper)

Call on the name of the Lord and repent of your backsliding. The Lord is gracious. He will accept you and restore to you the joy of your salvation.

For he who is least among you all will be great

The Lord Jesus had told his disciples that he was about to die and he added, ‘*Let these words sink down into your ears*’ but they did not understand him (44–45). Their fear to ask their Master for an explanation soon turned to self-assertiveness. These verses warn us against sins which may lurk in the hearts of all Christians:

- Pride and power-seeking (46–48). The Lord Jesus had spoken of the need for self-denial (23), but the disciples were more concerned for personal greatness. He took a little child and pointed to him as a pattern of the humility and childlike trust that he requires in us. If we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily (23), selfish ambition will be kept in check. *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself* (Philippians 2:3). J.C. Ryle comments, ‘Of all sins there is none against which we have such need to watch and pray, as pride ... No sin is so deeply rooted in our nature. It cleaves to us like our skin. Its roots never entirely die. They are ready, at any moment, to spring up, and exhibit a most pernicious vitality’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 1, page 327). Jesus said, ‘*For he who is least among you all will be great*’ (48). If we confess our sinfulness and dependence upon God each day and pray for the grace of humility, it will help drive pride far away from us.

- Intolerance towards other believers (49–50). John may have felt that he and the others should be congratulated for their zeal. They had forbidden the man to cast out demons in the name of Jesus but the man was not against them. **We must be intolerant of error, but not of other Christians who love the word of God and its infallible truths.** They may differ from us in their understanding of certain doctrines (eg. baptism or church government), but we should be glad when God blesses them in their gospel ministry and uses them to bring men and women to Christ (cp. Philippians 1:18). We should also let their zeal for the Lord challenge us to persevere in our work for the Lord.

The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save

The time had now come for the Lord Jesus *to be received up* (this refers to his ascension into heaven). *He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem* (51). He had to die before he would ascend into heaven and he was determined to complete the work that the Father had given him to do (John 17:4).

The Samaritans bitterly resented the Jews, who had destroyed their temple on Mount Gerizim about 128 BC. It was quite common for them to refuse hospitality to those who were travelling through their country to worship at Jerusalem. James and John wanted the Samaritans to be taught a lesson. They asked, '*Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and to consume them, just as Elijah did?*' (54; this refers to an incident recorded in 2 Kings, chapter 1).

The Lord Jesus rebuked them for their harsh spirit, reminding them, '*The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them*' (56). James and John would have destroyed a whole village because of its rejection of them. We must contend earnestly for truth, but we must also be humble and gracious toward those who oppose us (2 Timothy 2:24–26). J.C. Ryle observes, 'It is possible to have much zeal for Christ, and yet to exhibit it in most unholy and unchristian ways. It is possible to mean well and have good intentions, and yet to make most grievous mistakes in our actions. It is possible to fancy that we have Scripture on our side, and to support our conduct by Scriptural quotations, and yet to commit serious errors' (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, pages 333–334).

John visited Samaria later in his life when he was wiser and more gracious. The Samaritans had received the word of God and he was sent with Peter by the Jerusalem church to pray for the Samaritan believers. He then preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages (Acts 8:14–25). **How much better to seek the salvation of sinners rather than their destruction!**

Therefore it will happen ... they will kill me

Abram is set before us as an example in the New Testament because of his great faith (eg. Romans 4:1–25; Hebrews 11:8–19). There was a time, however, when his faith faltered. He had trusted God to take a step into the unknown when the Lord told him to go to Canaan. We may wonder why Abram did not trust in the Lord to provide for him during the severe famine that struck Canaan.

God did not direct him to go to Egypt and Abram was well aware of a problem that he would face there. He feared that the Egyptians would kill him if they found out that Sarai was his wife and then claim her for Pharaoh. Abram reasoned, '*Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, "This is his wife"; and they will kill me, but will let you live*' (12). Sarai was his stepsister (20:12) but the Egyptians were told that she was his sister (13). The half-truth was a lie which was intended to deceive. **Where was Abram's trust in the almighty, sovereign God?** God had promised that he would make him a great nation (2). The purposes of the Almighty cannot be thwarted by Pharaoh or by Abram's sin.

Pharaoh was attracted to Sarai and he treated Abram well for her sake and took her into his palace but the Lord intervened by sending diseases on Pharaoh and his household. When the king discovered the truth about Sarai, he rebuked Abram and sent them away (14–20). Abram did not build an altar in Egypt. Was he forgetting the faithfulness and promises of God?

Let us always be alert! If we fail to believe God's promises and are ashamed to confess Christ to those around us, we too will fail. If you are a Christian, your faith will be tested. Do not reason about the things that might or might not happen to you if you make a stand for Christ. Trust in God who controls everything that will happen to you. *The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe* (Proverbs 29:25).

Lord, I will follow you wherever you go

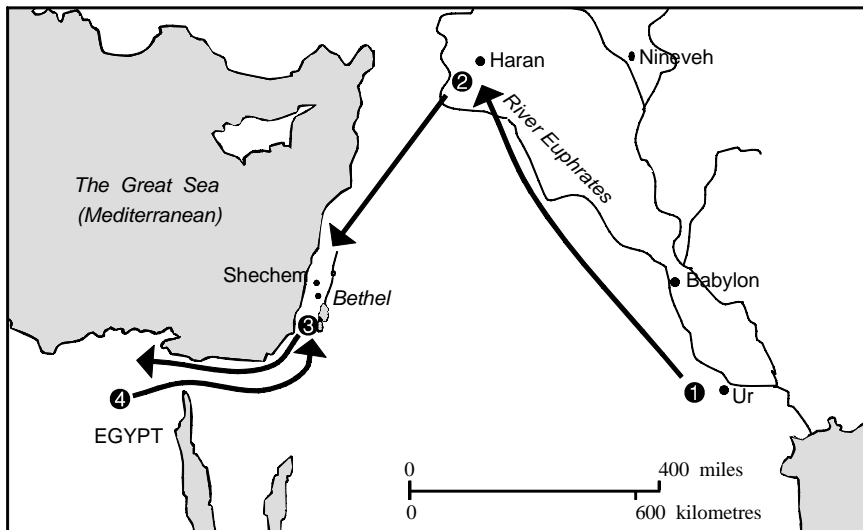
This passage teaches us that following Jesus is not an easy way of life. Someone appeared to be eager to follow the Lord (57–58). He had probably been moved by the wonderful teaching of Jesus and had seen some of his miracles and wanted to be part of the success story. The Lord Jesus cautioned the man, telling him that following him involved hardship. We are not told how he responded to this challenge.

Many are still attracted to the idea of following Christ, but they do not understand that the way of the cross is tough (see notes on verses 23 to 26 for 29 October). Their profession of faith is just a temporary phase. They found it easy to say to Jesus, ‘*Lord, I will follow you wherever you go,*’ but they failed to persevere in the face of trials and difficulties.

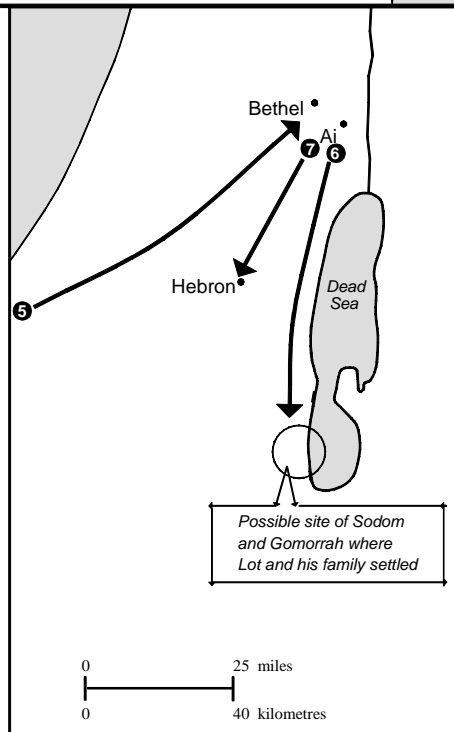
Jesus said to another man, ‘*Follow me,*’ but the man wanted to first go and bury his father before giving himself to Christ in full commitment. This may have been an excuse because if his father had died, he would have been making funeral arrangements rather than listening to Jesus with the crowds. Jesus would not allow such excuses and demanded that the man follow him now (59–60).

A third man said that he would follow Christ and made what seemed a reasonable request, but the Lord Jesus again detected a lack of commitment. We have God-given family responsibilities and we must honour our parents, but it is possible to make them an excuse for opting out of the Lord’s work. The man who looks over his shoulder cannot possibly plough a straight furrow in a field. If we attempt to look in two directions, we are not fit for the kingdom of God (60–62).

How is it with you? Is any person or any thing coming between you and the Lord? Or are you following Christ and enjoying his peace in your life? If you are putting off a commitment to follow him, do not delay any longer. *Now is the day of salvation* (2 Corinthians 6:2).



1. Abram and Sarai leave Ur for Canaan with Terah his father, and Lot. They settle in Haran.
2. After the death of Terah Abram leaves Haran for Canaan (about 2090 B.C.). He builds altars to the Lord at Shechem and Bethel.
3. Abram goes to Egypt (about 2089 B.C.) because of famine in Canaan.
- 4/5. He returns to Canaan and settles near Bethel but insufficient pasture land leads to strife between his herdsmen and those of Lot.
6. They separate. Lot chooses the fertile plain of Jordan leaving Abram with the hill country.
7. God renews his promise to Abram. He moves to Hebron and builds an altar to the Lord.



The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few

The Lord Jesus commissioned seventy others to preach and to heal the sick. They were to go ahead of him to every city and place through which he was to pass on his journey to Jerusalem. Jesus said to them, *'The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest'* (2). We often grow discouraged when there is so little response to the preaching of the gospel from our materialistic, indifferent generation. Remember that God is the Lord of the harvest and pray that he will send out workers and be yourself prepared to go at his bidding.

The labourer in God's harvest faces dangers and difficulties. Jesus told the seventy that they were going out as *lambs among wolves*. Their task was urgent and their lifestyle had to be simple (3–4; cp. verses 1–6). He gave them power to heal those who were sick and their message was that *the kingdom of God has come near to you* (9). He told these disciples that those who rejected them rejected Christ and God the Father (16).

Jesus then reproached the cities which had been privileged to witness many of his mighty works. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had seen many of Christ's miracles but had refused to repent. They would face greater punishment on the day of judgment than the wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon (13–15). The people of those cities would have repented had they seen such mighty works (13).

There is a solemn warning for those who reject the gospel message. It is a dreadful thing to have the kingdom of God come near to us (through hearing the gospel) and yet refuse to enter it; the judgment upon us will be all the more severe (11–12; cp. 9:5). If you are not a Christian, I urge you to repent of your sin and to trust in Christ. **The consequences of rejecting him are too dreadful to contemplate!**

There he built an altar to the LORD

Abram came from a family who worshipped false gods (Joshua 24:2). His life was changed after God appeared to him in Ur and told him to leave his country and his relatives and go to a land that he would show to him (1; cp. Acts 7:2–4). Abram faced a costly choice that required great faith when he left his country and family to follow where God would lead him. God promised, *'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'* (2–3). All these promises were fulfilled.

The Lord Jesus came through Abraham's line and he brings blessing to all nations. We would be lost and without hope but for his coming to this earth. He is the Saviour of Jew and Gentile (Galatians 3:26–29). What great blessings we have in him (Ephesians 1:3–7)! As spiritual heirs of Abraham God will indeed bless those who bless us and curse those who curse us (3). *If God is for us, who can be against us?* (Romans 8:31).

It seems that Terah, Abram's father, insisted on going with him and they settled in Haran (11:31–32). God had to remove Terah (through death) before Abram was able to do exactly as the Lord told him (1–4). **We must never allow human relationships to come between us and obedience to God's will.**

Abram was so different from the men of Babel. They wanted to make a name for themselves and built a city and a tower. Abram was a tent-dweller and a pilgrim who *waited for the city ... whose builder and maker is God*; this was a city not with a tower reaching to heaven, but a city in heaven (Hebrews 11:10, 13–16). Abram did not build cities, he built altars where he sacrificed and worshipped God. As he travelled from one place to another, we read, *There he built an altar to the LORD* (7–8). These altars were a testimony which proclaimed the name of the Lord to the heathen around him.

Let us make a name for ourselves

The end of this chapter contains a more detailed list of the descendants of Shem (10–32) but we are going to concentrate our thoughts on the first nine verses. The people of Babel built their city and great tower saying, ‘*Let us make a name for ourselves*’ (4). Like many sinners, they did not feel secure and they were fearful of being scattered. The tower of Babel was probably used for the worship of pagan deities. They excluded the Lord from all of their plans (6) and he punished them by scattering them and confusing their languages (the very thing that they had feared, 7–9). Pride was their undoing! Satan fell through pride when he tried to usurp the place of God (Isaiah 14:12; 1 Timothy 3:6). Pride was also the undoing of Adam and Eve when the devil promised, ‘*You will be like God*’ (Genesis 3:5). God hates pride (James 4:6); it is the spirit of the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Abram is introduced to us in the closing verses of this chapter (27–32) and from him the human ancestry of the Lord Jesus is traced (Matthew 1:1). The Lord Jesus, *in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant ... And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross* (Philippians 2:6–8). **Dare we cultivate proud hearts and high opinions of ourselves when the Son of God humbled himself to save us?**

*Amazing love! how can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

(Charles Wesley)

Are you full of selfish ambition, wanting to make a name for yourself? The Lord Jesus calls us to lead a life of self-denial (Mark 8:34). We should have the same attitude as that of the apostle Paul who said, ‘*God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*’ (Galatians 6:14).

Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven

The mission of the seventy was a great success and they joyfully told the Lord Jesus that even the demons were subject to them in his name. Jesus spoke of the master of demons, Satan, being cast out of heaven (17–18; cp. John 12:31–32; 1 John 3:8). Many Bible commentators believe that this refers to the fall of Satan and his angels when they rebelled against God before the world was made.

We do not generally enjoy such results from our witness as the disciples experienced. We may feel that there is little cause for rejoicing when there is very little response to the gospel. We may not be able to work miracles like the seventy but Jesus told them that they had greater reason to rejoice than this. ‘*Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven*’ (19–20). Having authority over demons does not guarantee salvation (see Matthew 7:21–23). Those whose names are written in heaven will go to heaven and while here on earth they have the privilege of knowing God as their heavenly Father and of pleasing him. Is your name written in heaven? Then praise God!

Jesus then rejoiced, addressing the Father as the *Lord of heaven and earth* (21). God is absolutely sovereign over the universe. He cannot be toppled from his throne. Jesus thanked the Father for his sovereignty in revealing the gospel to sinners. He hides gospel truth from those who consider themselves to be wise and prudent and reveals it to babes (those who have a childlike trust in him). The Father has given his Son all authority and Jesus is sovereign in revealing him (22).

He told his disciples that they were blessed in seeing these things and in hearing his teaching (22–24). We have a tremendous advantage over Old Testament believers because we have the New Testament and understand things which were hidden from them. We should not only rejoice because our names are written in heaven, but also because God has opened our eyes to see the truths of the gospel which are revealed in his word. **If you are a Christian without a rejoicing heart, is there something wrong in your life (cp. Philippians 4:4)?**

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

An expert in Jewish religious law asked Jesus a most important question, ‘*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*’ This ‘*eternal life*’ is a never-ending life which has a priceless quality. William Hendriksen comments, ‘It embraces such treasures as “the love of God shed abroad in our hearts” (Romans 5:5), “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7), “joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8), and “fellowship with God the Father and with his Son” (John 17:3)’ – COMMENTARY OF GOSPEL OF LUKE, page 591.

The man asking the question was not a sincere seeker but was testing Jesus, no doubt wishing to embarrass him (25). The Lord Jesus replied with a question, ‘*What is written in the law?*’ and the man quoted two scriptures (27; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). Jesus told him that he had replied correctly and that if he kept these great commandments, he would live. The lawyer realised the implications of this answer and was uncomfortable. He then asked, ‘*And who is my neighbour?*’ (29).

The parable of the good Samaritan (30–35) would have gone home with great force because the Jews only considered fellow-Jews to be their neighbours. The lawyer grudgingly admitted that the Samaritan was the neighbour to the man who had been beaten up and robbed rather than the priest or Levite who had ignored his plight. Jesus told him to be a good neighbour also.

J.C. Ryle asks, ‘What are we doing, each in our own station, to prove that this mighty parable is one of the rules of our daily life? What are we doing for the heathen, at home and abroad? What are we doing to help those who are troubled in mind, body, or estate? **There are always some near our own doors. What are we doing for them? Anything, or nothing at all?** ... The world would be a happier world if there was more practical Christianity’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, Volume 1, pages 379–380).

He was a mighty hunter before the LORD

This chapter contains three genealogies tracing the early descendants of Noah’s sons, Japheth (2–5), Ham (6–20) and Shem (21–31). John Currid in his commentary on Genesis describes this chapter as ‘The Table of Nations’. He points out that the term ‘*sons*’ not only includes individuals but obvious ethnic names of people groups (‘Kittim’ and ‘Dodanim’ or ‘Rodanim’ are plural words in the Hebrew; they speak of groups of people). The reason for the division of the nations (32) is given in the next chapter.

One of the descendants of Ham was Nimrod. *He was a mighty hunter before the LORD*. He enjoyed such renown as a hunter that every great hunter was called ‘a Nimrod’ (8–9). Some Bible commentators believe that the words ‘*before the LORD*’ indicate that Nimrod was flaunting his own might. John Calvin takes such a view and describes him as ‘the first author of tyranny’. John Currid writes that his name probably means ‘Let us rebel’. Nimrod was not only a great hunter but also a great ruler (10) and a great builder, founding the cities of Babel (Babylon) before going to Assyria to build Nineveh (10–11). These great cities have a history of opposition to God and his people. The Canaanites also built the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim which God destroyed on account of their wickedness and gross depravity (19:24–29).

There is a welcome contrast in the line of Shem from whom descended the Semitic nations. The word ‘Hebrew’ comes from the name of Abraham’s ancestor, Eber (24–25; 11:14–26; 14:13). **Many godly people were descended from Shem, but the most important thing is that the earthly descent of Christ also came through the line of Shem** (Luke 3:34–36). We thank God that in Christ Gentiles are also saved and brought into the family of God. Let us rejoice much in our great God and Saviour in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Whatever our race, whatever our background, Christians are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

Then he drank of the wine and was drunk

These verses make very sad reading. Noah took up farming and planted a vineyard. A worthwhile occupation became the occasion of sin in the life of Noah. He brewed wine from his vineyard. *Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent* (21). His son, Ham, discovered him naked and in a drunken stupor. Ham did nothing to cover his father but went and told his two brothers. They were shocked and they went backwards into their father's tent so as not to see his nakedness, and they covered him. When Noah found out what had happened he cursed Ham's son, Canaan. Why did he curse Canaan rather than Ham? We are not told, but he may have been involved with Ham in some immodest deed concerning his drunken grandfather. He was the ancestor of the wicked Canaanites, who were to be driven out of the promised land by Israel who were descended from Shem. Canaan became the servant of Shem as prophesied by Noah (22–27).

Noah remained faithful and stood firm when civilisation around him was collapsing into wickedness and violence but he fell into sin through brewing his own wine. **Noah did not intend to sin, but Satan was waiting for the unguarded, careless moment.** Past faithfulness to God does not give us an immunity from sinning or from being deceived by Satan's wiles. Many respected servants of God have had their lives blighted by sin. Noah lived another three hundred years, but we hear no more of him nor of any spiritual usefulness. Satan never sleeps! We must be vigilant; we must watch and pray (Matthew 26:41; Ephesians 6:10–18).

*Christian, seek not yet repose,
Cast thy dreams of ease away.
Thou art in the midst of foes:
Watch and pray.*

*Principalities and powers,
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hours:
Watch and pray.*

(Charlotte Elliott)

*You are worried and troubled about many things.
But one thing is needed*

Jesus was always a welcome guest at the home of Martha and Mary in the village of Bethany which was almost two miles to the east of Jerusalem. Jesus loved the two sisters and their brother Lazarus (John 11:5). Martha became very stressed as she busied herself serving Jesus and the disciples while Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus eagerly taking in all that he said. Martha was surprised that the Lord Jesus allowed Mary to relax at his feet while she was so busy, and she asked him to tell Mary to help her. She wondered if the Lord cared and she resented Mary for leaving her to serve alone.

Jesus replied, *'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part.'* Martha was serving while Mary was sitting at the Saviour's feet. Mary had opted for the good and necessary thing which was to have close fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Martha must have learned the lesson because she was later to make two wonderful professions of faith in Christ (John 11:21–22,27). Those who sit at the feet of Jesus are humble before him and they hear his precious word.

Have you been leading such a hectic life, that keeping up with your work and all the *'many things'*, is worrying and troubling you? **Have you been neglecting the 'one thing' that is needed – to enjoy real, unhurried fellowship with your precious Lord?** Do get your priorities sorted out and you will find daily help and strength from God and his peace will then rule in your heart.

*O that I could for ever sit
With Mary at the Master's feet!
Be this my happy choice;
My only care, delight and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth, be this,
To hear the Bridegroom's voice.*

(Charles Wesley)

GENESIS

23 NOVEMBER

Genesis 9:1–17

God used Moses to write the first five books of the Bible which are known as the Pentateuch (cp. Luke 24:27). We need to know and to understand the contents of Genesis, the first of these books, if we are to understand the rest of the Bible, especially the New Testament.

The title ‘Genesis’ means ‘origin’ or ‘beginning’ and was given to the book by the translators of the Septuagint (or LXX). * Genesis is a book of beginnings – the beginning of the universe, of life, of man, of human sin, of death, of families, of cities, of nations, of languages, of covenants and of redemption. There is one beginning that we do not read of – God never had a beginning. He planned and made ours.

Outline of Genesis

The Beginning of History (chapters 1 to 11)

Creation	1:1 to 2:25
The coming of sin into the world	3:1–24
The progress of sin	4:1 to 5:32
The wickedness of men and the flood	6:1 to 8:22
A new beginning with Noah	9:1 to 10:32
The rebellion at Babel	11:1 to 32

The Beginning of the Hebrew Race (chapters 12 to 50)

The life of Abraham	12:1 to 25:18
The life of Isaac	25:19 to 26:35
The life of Jacob	27:1 to 37:1
The life of Joseph	37:2 to 50:26

* The Septuagint is the earliest version of the Old Testament in the Greek language; the translation was sponsored by Ptolemy II of Egypt towards the end of the third century BC for use by Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria. The word ‘Septuagint’ comes from the Latin for seventy, ‘septuaginta’. 70 Jewish scholars who were fluent in the Greek language undertook this work.

I will remember my covenant

God commanded Noah and his sons, ‘*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth*’ (1–3, 7; cp. Genesis 1:28–30). He also told Noah that he could now eat the flesh of animals, whereas before the flood, man was only allowed a vegetarian diet (2–3; cp. 1:29–30). Though it was permitted to kill animals, God stressed to Noah the sanctity of human life. Man is made in the image of God and murder is an offence which must be punished by death. This is the just punishment for a terrible crime (5–6). It is a sad reflection of so-called ‘progressive thinking’ that many countries which no longer execute murderers put to death millions of unborn children through abortion. This is wickedness! The death penalty must not be applied where there is any doubt in the evidence, any more than it was in Israel of old. The New Testament also sanctions the death penalty for murder. We know that the apostle Paul should never have been on trial for his life but he said, ‘*If I am an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I do not object to dying*’ (Acts 25:11). When he wrote that the magistrate *does not bear the sword in vain* (Romans 13:4), he was referring to the death penalty.

The word ‘*covenant*’ is found seven times between verses 9 and 17. A covenant is a binding agreement between two or more persons, bringing them into a special relationship with each other. The Lord made a covenant with Noah for all mankind and for all the animal kingdom. In this covenant God promised that he would never again destroy the earth by a flood (8–11). He said, ‘*I will remember my covenant*’ (15).

God submitted his own Son to the death penalty to save sinners, the innocent One suffering for the guilty. The new covenant was sealed in the blood of Christ and the cup at the Lord’s table speaks of this new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). **God is totally committed to his people (Isaiah 54:9–10; Romans 8:31–39). He will always remember his covenant and he will never fail us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5–6).** Let us encourage ourselves in him.

Then God remembered Noah

The ark must have been surrounded by an eerie silence following the violent storms. Shut up for 150 days with no end in sight (7:24) Noah may have wondered at times whether God had forgotten him, but we read, *Then God remembered Noah* (1). John Currid points out that ‘the Hebrew word translated “remembered” does not denote a matter of mere recall or retention. The Hebrew word bears the additional idea of one’s acting upon the remembrance. It simply results in action’ (COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, Volume 1, page 202). When heaven appears to be silent to our prayers, we may ask, ‘Has God forgotten, does he really care?’ **Christian, you were bought at great cost (1 Corinthians 6:20). Can you imagine that God will ever forget you? (see Isaiah 49:14–16).**

In what way did God remember Noah and all the living creatures in the ark? He caused the waters to recede until the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (1–4). Noah sent out a raven which did not return to the ark. He later sent out a dove which returned to him. Seven days later it was sent out and returned with an olive leaf in her mouth. The dove was again sent out after a further seven days and it did not return to the ark. Noah uncovered the ark to find that all the water had drained away. He left the ark only when God commanded him to do so (5–19).

Noah had taken seven pairs of clean animals and birds into the ark and when he left, he built an altar to the Lord, sacrificing from each of them (20; 7:2–3). The Lord was pleased with the *soothing aroma* (21). These verses foreshadow the great offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross which was a pleasing aroma to God (Ephesians 5:2). His sacrifice was a propitiation for sin which appeased the wrath of God against sinners to bring us peace and reconciliation (Romans 3:24–26; 5:1, 8–11). Let us give thanks for our great salvation.

*Can a woman’s tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet I will remember thee.*

(William Cowper)

A recommended Commentary on the Book of Genesis

For further study of the Book of Genesis I warmly recommend John Currid’s commentary on Genesis, published by Evangelical Press in two volumes.

John Currid clearly states his position when he comments on the Evangelical Press Study Commentary Series. He writes, ‘One reviewer criticised the series for being “too Reformed”. Hallelujah! Am I so glad that he noticed! Our theological perspective is unashamedly Reformed. For this we do not apologise. The heart of this commentary series is the belief in a sovereign God who is Creator, Maintainer and Sustainer of the universe. Nothing happens in heaven or on earth apart from his sovereign will. History is “his story”, and the Bible relates that history truthfully and accurately. The Scriptures are thus the inerrant words of the sovereign Lord. The ultimate purpose of this commentary series is to glorify this sovereign God by reflecting the majesty of his character as it appears in the Bible. If we have not done that, then we have failed miserably’ (Volume 1, page 14).

The commentary is divided into sections, each section containing several short chapters. Each of these chapters closes with application. John Currid is a scholar who loves his Lord and this shines through his commentaries. He does not avoid dealing with the problems raised by unbelieving Bible teachers and he gives a clear and biblical response.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

The opening words of the Bible are the key to understanding life; if we leave God out of our thinking, we will certainly go wrong. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Godless men who want an explanation for the origin of life have promoted the theory of evolution to explain beginnings without reference to God. Our universe did not come about by accident or by chance. It is the handiwork of God who is absolutely sovereign, powerful and wise (Psalm 19:1). John Currid points out that the opening words of Genesis ‘deny evolution, because man did not develop from the primordial soup, but he was specially created by the one true God. And, frankly, that is why there is meaning to life. That is why those who believe in God can say that our chief reason for existence is to glorify him and enjoy him for ever. If this God is the Creator, then we are to live for his glory!’ (COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, Volume 1, page 64).

All that he made was ‘*very good*’ (31). Life does have purpose and meaning! Man was made in the image of God (26–27) to worship, love and serve him. To be without God is to be without true hope and purpose (Ephesians 2:12). To know that our great Creator loves us and delights in us is comfort indeed for every child of God (Psalm 121; Isaiah 40:25–31).

In the beginning God. He is the almighty Creator. **Let us now worship him with reverence and with awe.** *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained, What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him?...O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth* (Psalm 8:3–4, 9). **You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created** (Revelation 4:11).

Note:– For those who are interested in the scientific issues concerning creation and evolution, I recommend the literature and DVDs of ‘Creation Ministries International’ (UK) and their beautifully produced colour magazine ‘Creation’. Their address is 15 Station Street, Whetstone, Leicestershire, LE8 6JS 1DG (Website: Creation.com).

And the LORD shut him in

We must recognise that it was a miracle for such a vast number of birds and beasts to be brought into the ark and preserved there. God brought the animals and birds to Adam to be named (2:20) and it is certain that he brought the animals to Noah to be taken into the ark. Noah was six hundred years old when he took his household into the ark at the command of God (1–9). You will have noticed that the civilisation that lived before the flood enjoyed a very long lifespan; this was greatly reduced in the civilisation to follow.

A massive earthquake below the depths of the ocean triggered the tsunami in Asia in December 2004. Huge waves destroyed harbours, towns and villages in several countries, killing many, many thousands. That catastrophe was nothing compared with the flood described here. *The fountains of the great deep were broken up* (11). There were great tidal waves and the earth was totally submerged after forty days and nights of torrential rain (11–12).

The water began to recede after one hundred and fifty days (24), but Noah was in the ark for more than a year (11; cp. 8:13–14). Why did God send the flood? It was his judgment on wicked people (6:13) who rejected the preaching of Noah (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). The Lord Jesus said that before he comes again, the same godless conditions will prevail in the world as they did in the time of Noah. His second coming will be a wonderful event for those who belong to him, but it will be a dreadful day for unbelievers (Matthew 24:36–44).

And the LORD shut him in (16). Noah and his family were safe in the ark but it was too late for those outside because God had shut them out. If your heart is right with God you can look forward to the return of Christ with great joy and longing. You can say in the words of Scripture, ‘*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*’ (Revelation 22:20). Heaven and endless bliss await you. **You will be shut in and safe with God for ever. If you are not a true Christian, you will be shut out for ever.** The Lord Jesus warns, ‘*Be ready*’ (Matthew 24:44). Are you?

According to all that God commanded him, so he did

God told Noah that he would destroy the population of the world but that he and his family would be saved. He was to make an ark of gopher wood. Scholars cannot identify the tree from which this wood is obtained, but John Currid suggests that it may be cypress (COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, pages 187–188). The basket in which Moses was placed to be hidden in the reeds of the River Nile was also described as an *‘ark’* (Exodus 2:3). Noah’s ark and Moses’ ark were both designed to save their occupants from being destroyed by water and both were coated with pitch. Noah’s ark measured 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits wide and thirty cubits high. A cubit is approximately eighteen inches. This makes the ark 450 feet (140 metres) long, 75 feet (23 metres) wide and 45 feet (13.5 metres) high. There were three decks inside the ark (15–16).

God explained to Noah that he would destroy the world by a flood and that all on earth would die. He told Noah, *‘I will establish my covenant with you’* (17–18). This is the first time that the word *‘covenant’* is found in the Bible. God was graciously committing himself to rescue Noah and his family from judgment, to preserve a line from which the promised Saviour would come (cp. 3:15).

The Lord told Noah that when the ark was completed, he was to take his wife, sons and daughters-in-law into it. He was also to take two of each kind of animal, one male and one female to replenish the earth following the flood. He was also to gather sufficient food for himself and all the animals in the ark. The diet was vegetarian as no flesh was eaten at this time (cp. 1:29–30). – *Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did* (22). John Currid observes, **‘Noah was obedient, no matter that he was at odds with the world. Instead of conforming to the world, he was obedient to God’s word.** The building of a ship must have seemed ludicrous to Noah’s neighbours, who had never seen a flood, or even any rain (see 2:5). But Noah was not swayed, and he remained faithful to God’ (COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, Volume 1, page 191).

Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light

Creation is the work of the Trinity. *‘Let us make’* (26). The activity of the Spirit is seen in verse 2 and we know that all things were made through the Son of God (John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17).

There are some questions that arise concerning creation but space only permits a brief answer:

- ‘Did God really create everything in six days?’ Some understand a day in Genesis 1 to represent a long period of time but I cannot agree with them. The almighty God spoke and creation came into being, eg. *Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light* (3). In the fourth commandment the same Hebrew word is used to describe the *‘six days’* in which we should work as well as the *‘six days’* of creation (Exodus 20:8–11). After each day of creation we read of *‘the evening and the morning’* (5,8, etc.).
- ‘How could there be light on the first day before the creation of the sun on the fourth day?’ God is light and he gave the light. We know that in the new Jerusalem there will be no need for sun or moon because light will come from the Lamb of God (Revelation 21:22–23; 22:2–5). The light of the Creator is far greater than that of the sun.
- ‘Do not the ages of the rocks prove the world to be millions of years old rather than a few thousand?’ God created a mature world with mature rocks. Rocks were also formed as a result of Noah’s flood.

The Christian sees the world differently from the unbeliever because he knows that God created all things. Creation displays:

- The sure purpose of God. *And it was so* (7,9,11,15,24,30). God’s plans cannot be thwarted (Isaiah 14:27).
- The satisfaction of God. *And God saw that it was good* (10,12, 18,21,25,31). There is no room here for the theory of evolution. Creation is God’s work and it was spoiled by man’s sin.
- The infinite power of God. *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made* (Psalm 33:6). As we think of the vastness of the universe, let us worship the almighty, sovereign God (Psalm 95:3–7).

Let us make man in our image

Man is not an advanced animal, he is a unique being! God said, ‘*Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness*’ (26). Adam’s sin has defaced that glorious image, but we are still able to see God’s image in men and women:

- In knowledge. God is all-knowing and man thirsts to advance in knowledge. Humans are capable of reason; they write books and compile encyclopaedias. Animals are incapable of such achievements.
- In morality. *God made man upright* (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Adam was not created with a sinful nature. Man has a conscience and is able to distinguish between right and wrong.
- In creativity. We are able to create masterpieces of art and music. We appreciate beauty and order.
- In freedom. Animals are driven by instinct but man has a will with which he makes reasoned choices.
- In dignity. Man is special and he was made to have dominion over all other creatures (26; cp. Psalm 8:5–8).
- In his capacity to enjoy fellowship with God, to know him, to worship him and to obey him (cp. Colossians 3:10).

We are now seeing the appalling consequences of evolutionary teaching in which man is regarded as little more than an animal. Man’s inhumanity to man has been with us since the fall, but life is now regarded as a cheap thing. There has been an upsurge in violence and wickedness and there is also increasing racial tension in the world (a denial of man’s common origin from God), frustration and despair.

God’s image in us has been defaced and our sin separates us from him, but that is not the end of man’s story. **Let us thank God that he has made a way for us to have forgiveness and eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. We can be reconciled to God and enjoy fellowship with him. Hallelujah!**

Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD

God is never without a witness, even when the world is full of darkness and wickedness! God’s man for the hour was Noah. Our reading tells us several things about him:

- *Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD* (8). Grace is the undeserved favour of God and it was this that made Noah different from his contemporaries. He had the privilege of coming from a godly line but that did not save him. We are saved because of the grace of God, not through our own family connections or by works (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- *Noah was a just man* (9); this means that he was holy. Christian, God has chosen you in Christ and called you that you might be holy (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15–16). If you have no interest in holiness, you should question whether you are a true believer.
- He was *perfect in his generations* (9). This does not indicate that he was sinless, but that he had a blameless testimony among those who were wicked. No one could point the finger of blame at him and accuse him of hypocrisy. Society was totally corrupt but Noah was a man who dared to stand alone and be different. He resisted the pressures to fit in with the world around him.
- Like his great-grandfather Enoch *Noah walked with God* (9; see notes for 17 November).
- He enjoyed fellowship with God and the Lord revealed to him his plan to judge the world, and made a covenant with him (13,18).
- He was obedient to God’s word (22; 7:5). We read in the New Testament that Noah was motivated by reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 11:7).

Is it obvious to your relatives and to those around that you are walking with God?

*So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.*

(William Cowper)

The LORD was sorry ... and he was grieved in his heart

There was not only a population explosion in the world by the time of Noah (1) but also an explosion of wickedness. *The wickedness of man was great in the earth ... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (5). We read later that the earth was corrupt and filled with violence (11–12). Why were the godly unable to stem the tide of wickedness? *The sons of God* from the godly line of Seth * intermarried with women from the godless line of Cain because those women were beautiful (2). These women did not have the inner beauty of a godly heart and it is significant that after the deaths of Lamech and Methuselah, the only godly people left on earth were Noah and his family. Satan still uses the same tactics. Many Christians have sinned by marrying unbelievers and have suffered great spiritual loss.

God is patient, but he is not indifferent to human wickedness. He said, *‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever’* and he gave the people 120 years to repent before sending the flood (3). Noah was a preacher of righteousness, but the people refused to repent of their sin and the Lord destroyed them (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5).

The LORD was sorry ... and he was grieved in his heart (6). Does this mean that God has regrets or disappointment over thwarted plans? Does it mean that he made a mistake in creating man? No, not at all! God’s purposes can never be frustrated (Isaiah 14:24,27) and he knew that Adam would sin before he created him. He also decreed before he made the world that Christ would die for sinners (Acts 2:23). When we sorrow and grieve, it is with a sense of helplessness, but not so with God. John Currid points out that ‘Moses is employing expressions of human pain and sorrow to demonstrate God’s attitude towards mankind’s sin’ (COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, page 179).

* Some commentators believe that *‘the sons of God’* in verse 2 refer to fallen angels who married into the human race and produced offspring who were *giants* (4). I cannot agree with such speculation. It is true that angels are called *‘sons of God’* (eg. Job 1:6; 2:1) but they are incapable of reproduction (Matthew 22:30). See John Currid’s COMMENTARY ON GENESIS, volume 1, pages 173–175.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it

God’s work of creation was a completed work: *The heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished* (1). *‘The host’* not only refers to the sun, moon and stars (cp. Deuteronomy 4:19), but also to all the things and creatures that God made. God did not rest on the seventh day because he was weary after his work of creation. He never grows weary (Isaiah 40:28). God’s rest was a rest of accomplishment, of satisfaction and of joy. *Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (3). God set apart the Sabbath as a special day at the time of creation. The fourth commandment is the longest of the ten, and we must not despise it (Exodus 20:8–11).

The Lord Jesus has not abolished the Sabbath – he is *‘Lord of the Sabbath’* (Mark 2:28). He was criticised for healing the sick on the Sabbath, but in those instances he offended man-made rules not the fourth commandment. The first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, has become the Christian Sabbath (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10). Evangelicals have generally become very careless with regard to keeping the Lord’s Day, claiming that we have been released from such ‘legalism’ because we are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14–15). Is it legalism to have a day specially sanctified for worship when we can draw aside from the daily pressures of work? **Is it legalism to observe a day which testifies of creation (God resting on the seventh day)? Is it legalism to observe the Lord’s Day which testifies to the rising of Christ from the dead?**

How should we keep the Lord’s Day? There is necessary work which has to be undertaken. Hospitals and power stations, for example, must be kept functioning seven days a week. The Sabbath is ‘sanctified’ (set apart) for God’s people to meet together for worship. It is a day of rest which must not be confused with a day for sport or other leisure pursuits. When we rest from our own everyday work, we are also able to give ourselves to help those in need. Many Christians are proving that ‘a Sabbath well spent brings a week of content’.

It is not good that man should be alone

Adam is not a myth but a real man whose existence is endorsed in the New Testament (eg. Romans 5:12–19; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 2:13–14). This chapter gives us more details of the creation of man. God formed both man and animals from the dust of the ground but man is different in that God breathed into him *the breath of life; and man became a living being* (or ‘soul’; 7). God has given every human being a soul which will never perish (Matthew 10:28; Mark 8:36–37). Matthew Henry comments, ‘To God, that gave us these souls, we must shortly give an account of them, how we have employed them, used them, proportioned them, and disposed of them: and if it be then found that we have lost them, though it were to gain the world, we are undone for ever.’

God planted the garden of Eden and placed Adam in this perfect environment to cultivate the garden and to care for it (8,15). Adam was immortal and death had no power over him as long as he heeded God’s word concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (16–17). Adam lacked just one thing and God said, ‘*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*’ (18–23). Matthew Henry comments on these verses, ‘The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.’

Just a word to readers who are married. God ordained marriage for companionship and procreation (24). Adam needed a companion and a helper. Are you a good companion to your spouse? Do you encourage him (her) in the Christian life? Do you give support in difficult times? Are you loyal and faithful? **Let those of us who are married prayerfully seek at all times to work for a marriage where the Lord is always loved, honoured and obeyed. We will then shine as lights in this dark world.**

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him

Genealogies do not appear to be very interesting at first glance but they are important! Adam *begot a son in his own likeness, after his image* (3), not in the image of God but in the spoiled image of sinful man. Seth was born with a sinful nature and so is every child born since the fall of Adam (cp. Psalm 51:5). Notice the repetition of the statement, ‘*and he died*’ throughout the chapter (5,8,11, etc.). Satan had assured Eve, ‘*You will not surely die*’ (3:4), but these words expose his lie.

There is a man mentioned in this chapter who escaped death — *And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him* (24). What is involved in walking with God?

- To walk with God is to please God having a godly lifestyle. The Bible tells us very little about Enoch, but *he had this testimony, that he pleased God* (Hebrews 11:5; cp. Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1). **What kind of testimony do you have?** Enoch lived in a godless society, but he was determined to please God rather than men. We please God by loving him and by obeying his word.
- To walk with God is to trust in him. We cannot please God unless we trust him, putting our faith in him. *Without faith it is impossible to please him* (Hebrews 11:6).
- To walk with God is to agree with God. *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?* (Amos 3:3). Do you agree with what God says in his word and accept the teaching of the Bible? If you do not, you cannot walk with God.
- To walk with God is to love him. Love lies at the heart of our desire to please him (cp. John 14:23).

Enoch prophesied of Christ’s second coming (Jude 14–15). He may also have prophesied of the judgment to come through the flood which came the very year that his son Methuselah died. Lamech, the son of Methuselah, and father of Noah was also a man who acknowledged God in his work (29). **All of these men escaped the judgment of God. Will you?**

Then men began to call on the name of the LORD

Cain may have been able to hide his sin from humans, but he could not hide it from God. The question, ‘*Where is Abel your brother?*’ (9) was not asked because God did not know, but to obtain a confession of sin from Cain. Cain was cursed and he feared for his own life (11, 14). He said to the Lord, ‘*My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely you have driven me out ... I shall be hidden from your face*’ (13–14). He was much wiser than most sinners today. He realised that to be hidden from the smile and protection of God made life too dreadful to bear. *Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod* (which means ‘wandering’, 16).

We are often asked from where Cain obtained his wife. We must remember that Adam and Eve had many other sons and daughters (5:4). They were told by God to be fruitful, to multiply and to populate the earth (1:28). Lists of family names in the Bible only record those who are significant and only three of the children of Adam and Eve are named in Scripture. There were many others living on earth by the time God banished Cain. We are given a glimpse of two civilisations in this chapter – those descended from Cain and those descended from his brother Seth. Cain’s descendants were godless and there is no reference to God in their home life (19), agriculture (20), culture (21), or industry (22). Isn’t this still the problem today in most countries? Lamech who descended from Cain was the first polygamist to be named in Scripture and he was also a murderer (19–24).

The chapter ends with the words, *Then men began to call on the name of the LORD* (26). This is a description of people seeking God in prayer. What a contrast to the words, *Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD* (16)! From the godly line of Seth came Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Christ. Christians are those who *call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord* (1 Corinthians 1:2). **Happy are those people who call upon the name of the LORD. What is your prayer life like?**

Has God indeed said ... ?

If God’s creation was very good (1:31) why is the world in such a mess? We have the answer in this chapter of Genesis. We are not told here that the serpent is Satan, but the New Testament confirms that this is so (2 Corinthians 11:3,14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2). Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). How does he tempt us to sin?

- He casts doubt on God’s word. ‘*Has God indeed said ... ?*’ He may even contradict what God has plainly declared. — ‘*You will not surely die*’ (1,4). He still attacks the word of God and seeks to make us doubt it. He also blinds unbelievers so that they scorn the warnings of judgment and hell found in the Bible.
- He makes us doubt the goodness of God. His question to Eve in verse 1 was framed so that it appeared that God was denying access to every tree in the garden. That was not true.
- He makes sin appear attractive. The devil made the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil appear to be more desirable than the fruit of the other trees, though they were also *pleasant to the sight and good for food* (2:9). *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate ...* (5–6). **Sin is always more attractive in the imagination than in reality.** Satan promised them so much but they soon proved him to be a liar. He enticed Eve by promising, ‘*You will be like God, knowing good and evil*’ (5). Adam and Eve did not know evil before they fell, but afterwards they experienced the dreadful effects of sin and the suffering that it brings.

It is not sin to be tempted. Satan tempted the Lord Jesus. Sin comes when we yield to temptation. We do not have to give in to sin’s seduction (Romans 6:14)! God is faithful and will help us when we are tempted if we look to him (1 Corinthians 10:13). Have you been allowing your thoughts to feed on forbidden things? **Sin always begins in the heart and mind before it has its outward manifestation.** Satan is out to ruin us just as he ruined Adam and Eve. Let us be on our guard and may God give us grace to stand firm.

Where are you?

Adam and Eve soon discovered the dreadful consequences of their rebellion against God. The moment they ate the fruit, they were gripped with a sense of guilt, shame and fear. They were ashamed of their nakedness and made garments of leaves to cover themselves. Their peace and fellowship with God gave way to alienation and fear, and they tried to hide themselves from the Lord (7–8). The grace of God is wonderful! He sought the rebels and called to Adam, ‘*Where are you?*’ (9). Adam and Eve tried to shift the blame for their sin. Adam blamed Eve and she blamed the serpent (12–13). Have you been making excuses for sin and failure? God still calls, ‘*Where are you?*’ **You will never know real satisfaction until you are right with God and enjoying fellowship with him and with his people.**

Adam’s disobedience brought ruin and misery on mankind and on all creation (16–19; Romans 5:12; 8:20–23):

- For the woman. She was sentenced to pain in childbearing and to be in subjection to her husband. The harmony, joy and intimacy of the marriage relationship was spoiled by sin.
- For the man. The ground became cursed so that he would know hard toil and frustration in cultivating the earth.
- For all creation. Death came into the world. God made man from the dust of the ground (2:7) and men and women return to dust through death.

God promised a coming deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would bruise Satan’s head (15). This is the first of many promises in the Old Testament which speak of the coming of Christ into the world, who would destroy the works of the devil (Romans 16:20; cp. 1 John 3:8). Everyone should know the three R’s of the gospel, the first of which is found in this chapter: Ruin (Genesis chapter 3); Redemption (Romans chapter 3) and Regeneration (John chapter 3). **Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, but let us thank God that he has provided the way of reconciliation to himself through the blood of the cross.**

Blood cries out

Sin brought a bitter harvest into the lives of Adam and Eve. Cain, their first son, became a murderer, slaying his younger brother. Both sons had been taught about the Lord and we find them bringing offerings to God. God requires blood sacrifice to atone for sin (Hebrews 9:22). The Lord accepted Abel’s offering which fulfilled his requirements but he rejected Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground. An angry Cain refused to do as God required and in his jealous rage he shed blood by murder rather than by animal sacrifice (1–7).

Many people still have not learned that we must come to God on his terms. They vainly imagine that their good works and their honest way of life will gain them acceptance with God. They do not understand that they are sinners who fall short of God’s holy standards. There is only one way to God and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The message of the cross may seem foolish (1 Corinthians 1:18) but it is only through the shed blood of Jesus that there is forgiveness and cleansing from sin (Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7).

Cain pleaded ignorance when he was challenged by God. The Lord then said to him, ‘*What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground*’ (10). Abel’s blood cried out for justice and revenge but the blood of the Lord Jesus *speaks better things than that of Abel* (Hebrews 12:24). **Let us lift up our hearts in praise to God because the blood of Jesus speaks mercy, forgiveness, peace and eternal life.**

Glory be to Jesus,
Who in bitter pains,
Poured for me the life-blood
From his sacred veins.

Abel’s blood for vengeance
Pleaded to the skies;
But the blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries.

(Edward Caswall)