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This was originally written c. 1989 and has been re-formatted with additional material in 2019.

GENESIS//Chapter One/

In the Beginning. verse 1

This is the start of all things. Nothing occurred before this verse. Only God. Time started 'in the beginning'. The history of everything starts here!

God created the universe. verses 1 and 2

That's everything. Suddenly we have jumped from 'nothing' to 'everything'. The whole universe was created 'in the beginning'. No creation occurred before, and we shall see later that none has occurred since. Science calls it the 'Big Bang', the Bible just calls it 'the Beginning', or 'Genesis'.

The earth was without form, and void (empty). As yet it was not in shape, or populated or even vegetated, but:

The Spirit of God was moving over the water. We have met God as the Creator, now here He is as the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God was present on the face of the earth. God created earth as His footstool (Isaiah 66 v1) - a special place in the universe. The Spirit was present here. Later on, when Man bungles it (see chapter 3), the Presence of God is lost - Man is removed from it. It is not until Acts chapter 2 that the Holy Spirit is able to return to earth in a permanent way. The first act of God after Jesus restored the true relationship between God and Man was to restore the Presence of the Holy Spirit on the Face of the earth (i.e. with Man), just like He was at Creation.

Then God commanded or And God said. verse 3

Creation continues, God 'speaks' His creation into being. What does He speak? Words, or more correctly The Word of God. In John chapter one we read:

Before the world was created, the Word already existed; He was with God, and He was the same as God.....through Him God made all things.....The Word became a Human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us....the Father's only Son

Both John 1 and Genesis 1 say that the world was created through God's Word or words, and John 1 identifies that Word as Jesus. So when we read 'Then God commanded' or 'And God said' we are reading of what Jesus did, for He is God's Word. It's hard to fully appreciate, but here, in Genesis 1 verse 3, we meet Jesus for the first time in the Bible! By the third verse we have met all Three Persons of the Holy Trinity!

We do not know when the universe or earth were made, except that it was 'in the beginning'. It is possible that it was a long time before God said 'Let there be Light'. But there does not seem much point for the whole universe to have existed long before light was around. Personally I think

it was likely that the entire universe was made on Day 1 of the Creation week (Lightday). Chapter 2 verse 2 says 'everything was made by the seventh day'. The implication of that must be that everything was made in that week, including earth and the universe, for the notion of there being a Sabbath after six days of work comes from this. What is certain, however, is:

Light was the first thing created after the universe itself. Light is energy, and vital for all life on earth. There would be nothing alive without light. It was essential for the rest of Creation. Light is also understanding (2 Corinthians 4 v 6 compares the light of creation with knowledge and understanding of God). So one of God's first acts was to create, or make possible, understanding - that we might 'see the light'. Light is also revelation, God's purpose in Creation was to reveal His great love and compassion and mercy. So God made light first! He did not make it after the sun, so that it depended on the sun, He made it first, so that all things depend on His Light.

This light was to be pure, uncorrupted by 'darkness'. It was to be a clear understanding, a clear revelation. Often today people cover up their actions by doing them secretly ('in the dark'). God's actions were to be in the open, in the light; and that was His plan for us too!

End of first day. verse 5

Some people claim that the word used for 'day' here can be translated 'age' instead, and that God actually created in six ages rather than six literal days. In other words, an age could have been say, a thousand or even a million years. However if that were so then the end of verse 5 would read '*Evening passed and morning came, the end of the first age*'.

That doesn't make sense!! It seems to me that the writer has gone to a lot of trouble to make it clear that he IS talking about a literal 24 hour long day. Otherwise why mention 'evening' and 'morning'?

Sky. verses 6 to 8

God now makes the Sky, and separates the waters 'above' the sky from the waters below it. It seems that God placed a protective shield of water around the earth in those days. Several things would result from this, according to scientists who believe Genesis. Briefly these are:

- i) a planet-wide temperate climate producing lush vegetation from the poles to the equator and an even temperature of about 70deg F throughout.
 - ii) a shield to filter out the harmful cosmic rays from the sun.
- This would result in people living longer, as we will see that they did.

Seas and Land. verses 9 and 10

At first, there was a total covering by sea. On day 3 there is a lot of oceanic and geological activity, and the continents and islands start to appear. The water is 'kept in its place'.

Land vegetation. verses 11 to 13

Now plant life can grow! Plants and trees are placed by God across the face of the earth. It was a wonderful sight, and there was plenty of grain and fruit for the animal and human life to follow.

Sun, moon, and stars. verses 14 to 19

Yes, these were created after plant life had already appeared on earth!!

They were created as timepieces (the sun gives us days, seasons and years, the moon gives us months, etc.), and were created to 'rule the light and darkness'. So although light already existed it was put under the control of the sun and moon and stars. Why were all these heavenly bodies created? 'To shine on the earth'. So their light reached the earth from the day they were created. Never mind that some of them are so far away that their light takes millions of years to reach us, from Creation day 4 on it has reached us! And it could be that the light we are now seeing from some of these far flung stars was created on the way to us! (Later on we discuss the age of the earth, from the point of view of the Bible).

GENESIS//Chapter Two/

Completion verses 1 to 4

The job was done. There was nothing to add. No new creatures would be made later. No new worlds or stars. It was finished! The same cry that Jesus gave on the Cross to indicate the redemption of God's Kingdom from the clutches of Satan was made here in Genesis 2. Creation is over, it is finished! At the Cross, Creation is redeemed.

The Theory of Evolution requires creation to be an on-going process, whereby single cells evolve into new, more complex beings which in turn evolve 'upwards'. Genesis 2 v 1 says NO, it is finished. We know it to be true that the total amount of energy in the universe is constant, and that it is all becoming less useful as it dissipates into background heat. No new energy is ever formed, that is but one scientific fact that backs up the claim here in verse 1 that it is finished.

God rested verses 2 and 3

God stopped what He had been doing and blessed the seventh day. The Sabbath is thus the first Holy Day that we have been given. It is a day on which we should stop the work that we have been doing (our normal daily jobs) and rest. Whatever we do on the sabbath, it should be a break from the norm.

The earth verses 5 to 14

As created the planet was perfect for supporting life. The ground was well watered from below by streams from under the earth. Man was set in the Garden of Eden, a fantastic place full of beautiful plants and trees. There was plenty of lush fruit to eat. Right in the centre were two very special trees that will feature large in the Bible later. The best was right in the centre! Man had been formed from the earth itself ('*Son of Dust*'). He was completely a part of this planet.

The great river flowed out from the Garden. Beautiful stones and jewels were to be found along its banks as it divided and flowed in four directions, giving life to the earth around it. The water flowed from the garden, which is where God placed Man, to give life to the rest of the earth.

Work to do verse 15

God created Man to be a working being. We were given a job to do right from the start, and not just any old job but one full of importance:

- Firstly the Man was to both cultivate and guard the garden. The richest and most beautiful place on earth, God gave to Man as his own. Can you imagine giving over your garden to someone else? What if that someone else was so much inferior to you? Yet God gave over his garden not just so that Man might be a paid gardener, but that it might be Man's garden completely! God was no longer even going to guard it, it was Man's for the looking after and protecting.

- Secondly Man was made responsible for naming all the other animals and birds. He was thus proclaimed greater than they are, since names are given to those we are responsible for or above. This is part of the fulfilment of chapter 1 verse 28. In that verse God gave Man dominion over all the earth and its creatures. Dominion means Rule and Authority. God gave Man rule and authority over everything that lived on earth and that happened on earth.

Because God gave Man work He gave him worth.

Without work people feel worthless, that's the great tragedy of unemployment, not that people have not got enough money (though that is serious enough), but that they feel worthless. God gave Man worth and responsibility. It is so often the case that when men turn from God they seek to remove worth from their fellow human beings. This is clearly seen in regimes such as the apartheid in the past in South Africa and the southern USA (making sections of community 'second class') and the Concentration Camps of Hitler's Germany.

But God also gave Man instructions to follow. He was letting Man know that although God had given him so much responsibility, authority and dominion God was God and He was Boss; but God is a loving God and did not pile on loads of bureaucratic petty rules. He simply said '*Do not eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden*'. The rest Man could do as he liked with. One tree was special, reserved for God if you like. Man demonstrated his obedience to God by not eating from it, he proclaimed his rebellion if he ate of it. The consequences sound severe, but eating of that tree would mean that Man was pronouncing himself independent of God, the Author of Life. So there was no way that he could 'go on living forever' because he was rejecting the Giver of Life. You cannot reject Life and not die!

Helper verses 18 to 25

God had made Man as His Friend, and recognised in turn Man's need for companionship in Man's image. So God made Woman. She was made from Man's own flesh, so that the natural state for human life would be for a man and a woman to be one flesh : married. We were created with marriage in mind as the right way to live. There is a natural innocence in their relationship. It is not cluttered or confused by sin. They were naked and not embarrassed. They were, after all, 'one flesh', and that is the way it should be!

Difficulties with this chapter

A casual reading may make you feel that this chapter contradicts chapter 1 in several ways. It is true that the account seems to suggest that Man was created before the animals, whilst Genesis 1 suggests the other way around. This chapter, however, is mainly about the relationship between Man and God and Man's Dominion of the earth. It is a 'blow up' of Creation Day 6 to some extent, in that it shows events of that day more clearly, but it is mainly written to show us that God was doing something very special when He made Man. The animals were brought to Man to name them. It does not matter that they were created hours before him, he could not name them before he was made! It also clearly states the relationship between Man and Woman as instituted by God. It tells us clearly how these things are meant to be!

GENESIS//Chapter Three/

Temptation verses 1 to 6

Immediately Satan comes along to ruin things. We do not yet know that it is Satan. As normal he is disguised as something else. He knows full well that if he showed up as himself very few would have anything to do with him. So he disguises himself, often as something very ordinary, sometimes as an 'angel of light' (which he originally was). He looks plausible, sane and normal. We never know just when he is going to show, or what he will look like. All we can be certain of is that he will show up to foul things up at some point, and we should be ready.

Here he is then, as a snake. Don't worry that snakes today can't speak. Lots of things in Eden were different. Man was in the centre of creation to have dominion over creation, and all things were one in God. So Man should have been on guard lest one of the lesser parts of Creation came along to seize control and dominion. He should have been!

The first temptation was a subtle one. In the older translations verse 1 says that the serpent (snake) was 'more subtle' than any other creature. It was a cleverly worded question to make the woman doubt God, or to demonstrate less than complete trust in Him. The outright suggestion of disobedience comes later, once lack of trust is established, or the idea that God is not to be trusted totally has been sown. How often Satan repeats that question in your ear: 'Did God really say?'

- *Did God really say no sex outside marriage, or was it made up by the Victorian Church?*
- *Did God really say we should pray to Him ?*

- *Did God really say Jesus is the Only Way?*
- *Did God really say that such-and-such is a sin?*

We must learn to watch out for that question. The chances are that if we can hear it being asked then the answer is YES HE DID!

It might be worthwhile just for a moment to consider what temptation is anyway. The Devil isn't going to waste a lot of time trying to get you to do something that you'd never do in a million years. He's going to hit you where you are weakest. In verse 1 it was to begin to get the woman to doubt God, and by verse 5 it was to lust after equality with Him. Temptation is all to do with choice. If there are several cakes on a plate, all of which I love, and I have to choose just one then that is a choice. If there are several cakes on a plate and I dislike all except one of them, then there is no choice for me, because I will only select that one whatever the case. Temptation is just like that. There are several (normally just two) possibilities. You can be certain that Satan will have organised it such that the 'wrong' possibility is an attractive one to you. There would be no choice if you did not actually desire the sinful path at least as much as you desired the Godly path. Your weak spots are probably different to mine, but for both of us our recurring problems will be with our weak spots until God transforms us, by a complete change of our minds, and we no longer desire that particular sin. That is when we can know victory in our own lives!

How to Face Temptation verses 3 onwards

Actually, the woman starts off by getting it right. The only way to successfully ward off Satan's tempting suggestions is to rely on what God has said, to quote or recall the Word of God. Here the woman does just that. Unfortunately, she does not totally believe it, the words for her were hollow, because almost as soon as she has finished saying them she was disobeying them.

'Learning Bible verses by heart' does not simply mean being able to give a word perfect rendition of, say, John 3.16 at a moment's notice. Anybody can do that if they want to. To really know a Bible verse in your heart it has to be so well known that it is a part of you, that going against what it says is an impossibility for you. It needs to be something that you fully believe in and are prepared to rest your whole trust and lifestyle on. When you know the Bible, or even only some of it, that well, then Satan cannot touch you. This is exactly how Jesus knew His Scriptures, when He quoted them 'by heart' to defeat Satan in the Wilderness (see Matthew 4 v 1-11). It is what Paul was talking about when he said that the Word of God is a '*shield of faith, with which to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One*' (Ephesians 6 v 16). It is imperative, if you wish to be victorious rather than defeated, that you get to know your Bible that well. Start with just a verse or two that means something to you. Learn it so that you can quote it word perfectly (including references if possible, e.g. 'John 3.16'), and then keep on reading and repeating it so that it 'soaks in' to your soul and consciousness. Obviously it's a long process, but the more you read the Bible the easier it will become, because the more you will be 'tuned in' to God's Word anyway.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. Satan does not give up easily, however, and verse 4 shows him hitting back with another attack. This time, instead of continuing to repeat God's Word, the woman turns to look at the tree in question. Instead of being fixed on God and what He said, she now begins to pay attention to both Satan and the circumstances around her.

It's so easy to do that, and it's also asking for trouble! She was now beginning to make a choice, to turn from God and Eden and Dominion over Creation and Life Eternal, to turn to a fruit from a tree that would last perhaps five minutes! So often we are tempted to go for something pleasurable or satisfying that will last mere minutes, instead of something which lasts Forever, and which is so much more pleasurable and satisfying in the long run! As she looks at this fruit she sees it to be:

Tasty Beautiful Desirable

So much that is ultimately harmful in the long term often has all these qualities in the short term. And it is too late afterwards to go back.

The Tempted becomes the Tempter verse 6

Now she is a sinner, a rebel against God. She has blown it for herself, she has lost all that she was given. But that doesn't stop her leading her husband astray. He also eats the forbidden fruit.

Note though that he *was with her all the time*. Although it is easy to blame Eve, it was Man, Adam, that God had given the command to and his responsibility was to protect his wife. He completely fails to do that. Instead of standing there quietly listening to the conversation between the snake and Eve he should have taken her by the arm and pulled her away. He should have clearly repeated over and over "God said we cannot eat of this tree, that is all we need to know". In chapter 2 verse 15 we read *The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden to take care of it and to look after it* and that included keeping it free from danger and keeping his wife away from danger. *"The fruit of this tree is poisonous, dear, and we must not listen to this beast"*.

Although it was Eve who took the fruit and ate it first, and then gave it to Adam and he ate also, the Bible is clear that it was Adam's responsibility: *Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world. Now everyone has sinned, and so everyone must die.* (Romans 5:12)

IMMEDIATELY (verse 7)

they realised they were naked. Immediately they lost all the innocence that they had had in God's Presence. Now they were embarrassed and ashamed, but now was too late. The relationship that they had had with God was ruined.

They were no longer in God's Presence verses 8 and 9

Man and Woman hid from God. The Presence of God was no longer with Mankind. The Spirit of God had been lost, Man was no longer one with His Creator, and in shame and fear they cower amongst the trees.

Immediately, God begins to look for Man. He who Created and gave Man his life now begins to seek Man. God has not given up on them! God wants Man to return to Him, and again gives them a choice. Instead of 'going and getting' them (as, of course, God knew exactly where they were hiding), He gives them the Choice of returning to Him. God never forces us into His Presence whilst we are on earth. Here we always have a choice. That will not be so at Judgement, but until then we have a literally God-given right to approach Him or not as we choose.

Keeping God at Arm's Length verse 10

Although Man hears God, and replies, he continues to hide. He attempts to have a conversation with God without actually coming into direct contact with him. A direct encounter is something we nearly always try to avoid, in fact. Those Mighty Men of faith in the Bible who have experienced God's Presence in powerful ways so often fall to the ground crying '*There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful.....and yet, with my own eyes, I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!*' (Isaiah 6 v 5). Is it any wonder that modern Christians run scared of the Charismatic movement, where the expectation is that God actually involves Himself in what we do, think and say? For so long even Christians have sought to hide from God behind religious structures and false piety. Church services (in all denominations) have often in the past been structured deliberately not to allow God's Spirit a say in the proceedings. Thankfully things are changing in places, although it is a slow process because the natural instinct of 'fallen' Man is to hide from God!

I'm not responsible! verses 11 to 13

Another natural instinct of the sinner is to attempt to blame someone else:

The Man blames: The Woman that YOU (God) put here

The Woman blames: The Snake

Now the sins are piling up. They're now refusing to accept the responsibility for their own actions. The truth is that each of them, by their own choice disobeyed God. They are both responsible for their own actions. Yes, the Woman did tempt the Man. That was a further sin that she committed, but the Man did not have to go along with her. His sin was entirely his own fault.

Not content with blaming each other and Satan, the Man even blames God! You put her here, I didn't ask for a wife, now look at the trouble You've caused me! Neither of them are honest, neither of them say 'I know that I have disobeyed You God, Please forgive me, let me start again'.

That is the sort of response that God is looking for in us today, it is the sort of attitude we need to have if we are to be right with God.

The consequences verses 14 to 19 and 22 to 24

All disobedience carries its consequences, from the small child disobeying its parent to a person disobeying God. Often the consequences are far reaching. The rest of Human history stems directly from the disobedience and refusal to repent of the first Man and Woman. But, more directly, God pronounces the following Judgements:

• **To the Snake** (the original tempter): from then onwards it would have to crawl in the dust of the ground (snakes may well have had legs before this, perhaps similar to lizards). It would also be feared and hated by the 'offspring of Woman' (how true that is!).

There is also a prophecy here about what Jesus will do to Satan on the Cross; though Satan struck at Him, He had the Ultimate Victory (crushed Satan's head).

• **To the Woman:** now there would be pain in Childbirth for human women (have you ever marvelled at the simplicity of birth in the animal kingdom, compared with the traumas of Human labour?). Even so, she would still desire her husband (and sex). She was also to be subject to him, the man was to be the 'master'.

• **To the Man:** In many ways his is the most severe of all the punishments, because he was created to be God's Friend, and because he was given dominion and responsibility for all that occurred on the earth. 'The Buck stopped with him' as we say, and he had blown it 'good and proper'. God's Own Son would eventually die because of what Man had done, and even that would be because God still loved mankind. Man had chosen to listen to his wife with more attention than he listened to God.

So God cursed the ground. It no longer produced the lush vegetation described in chapter 2. Now there were thorns, thistles and weeds in abundance, but crops only with hard work. The Garden of Eden was lost to Man; ultimately and inevitably, God removed the provision of Eternal Life from the grasp of humanity. Just as He had warned, disobedience brought death. Satan's lie in verse 4 was fully exposed. Both Adam and Eve (as they are now to be known) would die, and so would all their descendants. *In the day they disobeyed* they became creatures who would die.

Notice, however, that God did not sentence them to death. They did it themselves, by choosing to disobey God despite the fact that He had told them this would lead to death. It was the *last thing* that God wanted for them, but it was the *first thing* they chose for themselves.

God continued to Love them verses 20 and 21

Despite all that they had done; and how much they had hurt God; He did not stop loving them. As soon as the pronouncement is over, He makes them clothes! God made them clothes! They had rejected Him, but He did not reject them. He gave them what they chose (death, and life apart from Him), but before He let them go He gave them clothes. Can anyone doubt that God is a God of Love having read this far into the Bible?

What sort of clothes? Garments made from animal skin.

There was no death in the world, where did animal skins come from?

God sacrificed animals to produce the clothes. Instead of Man and Woman dying, animals died. This substitution would later become a lasting requirement under the Old Covenant, pointing to the time when God Himself, Jesus the Son, would die in place of Man.

Death had entered the world, and the awfulness of it began to dawn on Adam and Eve as they stood before God in skins possibly dripping with blood. Dressed in this way their nakedness was covered, God looked at them and saw the coming sacrifice of Jesus so He saw Jesus wrapped around them. The serpent looked on speechless, for his plan had failed and God had something bigger in mind; as yet he could not even begin to grasp what that was but God's words to him about a descendant of the woman 'striking him on the head' must have made him begin to shudder.

God is also God of Justice verses 22 to 24

He also, as Judge, had to make sure that His Judgements were upheld, and so as Adam and Eve leave Eden for the last time, He seals it off from mankind and separates us from the Tree of Life forever. Well, almost (see Revelation 22 v 2). Man was now on his own, it seemed. Can anyone doubt that God is a God of Justice having read this far into the Bible?

GENESIS//Chapter Four/

Regrets verse 1

Adam and Eve must have regretted their mistakes for the rest of their nine hundred years of life. Can you imagine how they must have felt? They had lived with God in a loving closeness that no-one since has experienced, except Jesus. They had been with God, and were now without Him. Perhaps they felt that it would have been better for them never to have been Created (see Matthew 26 v 24, for Judas, also, lived in close communion with Jesus; when he realised the mistake of betraying Him, he went to hang himself). God had said that in the day of their sin they would die, and so they did - their relationships with Him were ruined, their innocence was lost, and their right to life forever was gone. It would take 900 years for the disease of Death to finally end their walks on earth though!

They continue to remember God, however. How could they forget Him? When Cain is born, Eve realises that childbirth is a miraculous, God-given gift, and acknowledges His help in it.

The trials of Parenthood verses 2 to 3

God gave them two sons to rear. In many ways parenthood is a reflection of God's relationship with us; He Himself chooses to call Himself our Father. So Adam and Eve knew all the struggles and joys of raising these children. They had hopes for them, fears for their future. Between them they looked after 'the farm'; caring for the flocks and tilling the ground. They had both been taught by their parents to honour the Lord, but in Cain's case the lesson was not fully appreciated.

Jealousy verses 4 to 7

Cain brought some of his produce to the Lord, because he had too. Abel brought the first lamb and gave the best parts to the Lord, because he wanted to.

That was the difference. One obeyed a religious duty taught him by his parents, the other acted out of love towards his God. So it was that, naturally, Cain's offering was not acceptable to God because God is really interested in the attitude of our hearts than what we actually give or do. Verse 4 says that God was pleased with *Abel and his offering* **not** *the offering and Abel*. He paid attention to the man first, then what he gave. We can never 'buy God off' by attending Church a certain number of times, or confession, or giving more in the collection. God always looks first at the attitude of our hearts.

So Cain became furious. He had been rejected, and once more the sinner begins to blame others. He did not learn a lesson, and humble himself before God. He felt mistreated, rather than justly treated. His inner self had been exposed - it can never be hidden to God - and now he was mad.

God spells out to him just why it was that his offering had been rejected. Because he had not done the right thing. If he had brought his offering out of a real desire to give to God then he would be smiling. And God gives Him a warning:

..sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule over you, but you must overcome it.

That verse is one we would all do well to learn! Because Cain had already started down the path to evil, the way would become easier and easier. he had to turn back now! God does not compromise. He knew Cain's heart and warned him, Cain could not expect to be favoured if he did wrong!

The first murder verse 8

Chapter four of the history of mankind, and we are now witnesses to the first murder. Sin has now grown to the extent that a man kills his own younger brother. This murder is premeditated and planned. Cain killed Abel.

Sin breeds sin....and punishment verses 9 to 12

Immediately, God asks Cain where Abel is. He knew, of course, but does not accuse yet. Cain's answer is both a blatant lie and a rhetorical question designed to make everything look 'alright': '*Am I supposed to look after my brother?*'. The answer, not given here, is found throughout the Bible: **YES**. We are not independent of each other, we need to help and rely on each other. The early Church in the Book of Acts is a picture of how God wanted us to live from the beginning and still does now!

Guilt cannot be hidden from God, He knows all our works and thoughts, and will deal with them accordingly. Up to now God has issued no Laws (apart from the original instruction to Adam about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), and so the death penalty for murder is not yet in use. Yet Cain has to be made to see that his is not just a minor offence. He is therefore placed under a curse, no longer will he be able to farm the ground. His livelihood is taken away from him, and he is forced to wander in search of food and water: in short, he becomes a Nomad.

Regrets, but too late! verses 13 to 16

Now Cain realises how serious things are, now that they are beginning to affect him, and not just others. How true, and how sad, that we often only really take note of a situation when it directly affects us. We can read of terrible things such as earthquakes or famines, but often we will be unmoved by those reports. There is a national outcry, however, if there is a water shortage at home! The same can be said for our private lives, we often keep other peoples' problems well out of our minds, until it happens to us.

Unfortunately for Cain it was too late. God had pronounced His Judgement. But God is merciful as well as just! Cain fears being cut off from God completely (the God who, up to now, Cain has done his best to keep at arm's length. Now Cain wants Him close!) Cain also fears being murdered himself, as he begins to recognise the dreadful seriousness of the act he has committed.

Fortunately for Cain God does not give up on him, but goes on loving him despite everything. He protects him with a warning mark, and promises sevenfold revenge should anyone kill him. So Cain goes off to the land of 'Wandering', a desert Nomad no longer in the Lord's presence.

The pre-historic tribes of Man verses 17 to 24

Cain takes a wife. That need cause us no problems, because the Bible as a rule only lists sons, not daughters. Adam and Eve would presumably have had quite a large family by the end of their 900 year lives, and so Cain's wife would in fact be one of his sisters. There is no possibility that God created other people other than Adam and Eve, because chapter 3 verse 20 clearly states that Eve was the Mother of all human beings. So Cain has several sons, the wanderers or nomads (verse 20), the early musicians (verse 21) and the toolmakers (verse 22). Here we have the Bronze and Iron Age people. The tools they used depended on what was available, not on the passing of time. There are still 'Stone Age' and 'Iron Age' tribes in remote corners today. They are demonstrating Man's God-given gift of inventiveness, to be able to adapt to and succeed in all situations and circumstances.

Mother is comforted verses 25 and 26

All Eve's hopes for her boys had been dashed. The youngest had been killed, and the eldest - the murderer - had now left home never to return. Worse still, deep down, she knew it was all her fault. If only she had not disobeyed God, they would all be happy in Eden! Surely God must feel exactly the same way for losing her and Adam, for they were to Him like His children.

Once more, God shows His love, and gives her another son, Seth. She recognises again God's hand in this, and records her gratitude. In his turn, Seth has a son, Enosh. It is then that mankind starts to worship God, but sadly things have still to get worse.....

GENESIS//Chapter Five/

A Family Tree

Here we have a painstaking account of a family's history. Not just any family, but the family of Adam, the first Man. Before the list starts we are reminded that God created Man in His own image, like Himself, male and female. God chooses to reveal Himself to us as 'Himself', but all that is in mankind, male or female, is in God, because we are all created in His image. And Adam's son was like Adam, who was in God's image, so Seth was in God's image, and so are we!

Adam had other children, but we are only interested in the line of his offspring that proceeds through Seth, to Noah and, ultimately to both Jesus and ourselves.

Notice that it is a painstaking account, a lot of detail has been written down. There are some people who would suggest that there are gaps in this account, that only the most important generations are included. They argue that the word translated 'son' could equally well be translated 'descendant', and hence we only get some of the descendants of Adam and Seth included.

But the account is far too painstaking to really allow that. Consider verses 6 to 8, for example, if we replace 'son' by 'descendant':

When Seth was 105, he had a descendant, Enosh, and then lived another 807 years. He had other descendants and died at the age of 912.

I think that you will agree that, written like that, those verses do not make much sense. If Enosh was to be Seth's descendant in the distant future, it wouldn't suddenly happen when Seth reached the age of 105, nor would he live another 807 years after he had a distant descendant! The rest of the verses are similarly constructed, so I think we can discount any notion that this is not a complete record of the sons, grandsons, and so on of Adam. Much care has been taken to make the record read true, beyond reasonable doubt. God is not a deceiver, and so surely would not let the writer of His Word be so misleading!

Hence I believe that we can be sure that here we have a complete and precise record of that early family. But, of course, we do not have a list of all the people alive at the time. We have a list of descent that eventually produces Noah, and hence through him all humanity since.

It is interesting to work out the dates of all the people mentioned, timing from the year of Creation. A chart showing this is on the next page.

*Timechart from Creation to the Flood.
Information from Genesis chapters 5 and 9.*

Year		
0	ADAM born	
130	SETH born	
235	ENOSH born	
325	KENAN born	
395	MAHALALEL born	
460	JARED born	
622	ENOCH born	
687	METHUSELAH born	
930	ADAM died aged 930	
974	LAMECH born	
987	ENOCH taken aged 365	
1042	SETH died aged 912	
1056	NOAH born	
1140	ENOSH died aged 905	
1235	KENAN died aged 910	
1290	MAHALALEL died aged 895	
1422	JARED died aged 962	
1556 and later	SHEMHAM JAPHETH born	
1651	LAMECH died aged 777	
1656	the year of the FLOOD	METHUSELAH died aged 969

It is interesting to note, of course, that the mathematics works out so that all of them, except Noah and his sons, were dead by the time of the flood. We would expect this, since we shall see in the following chapters that the flood killed all who were alive at the time. Methuselah dies in the year of the Flood, about which more in a moment.

Approximately 1700 years then passed between the Creation and the Flood. It was not such a great passage of time that God should be so forgotten (especially in view of the great ages to which they lived. Noah's Grandfather Methuselah was born before Adam died. They probably knew each other). Yet, as we shall see in the next chapters, Man was totally without God and wicked in His sight.

There were exceptions of course. Enoch was one. His life was so devoted to God that he did not die, God simply 'took him away'. We know nothing about him, except that he was devoted to God, and that God removed him from the evil world.

Eventually Noah is born, and Lamech prophetically names him 'Relief' (that is the meaning of 'Noah'). He it would be that would deliver mankind from the evil of that early world.

Points

The question of the great age of these early people is considered briefly in the appendix.

It might be worth considering what the population of the earth was likely to have been by the year of the flood (1656). To do this, of course, we need to make several assumptions.

Let us firstly assume that everyone lived for 900 years, which seems to be a fair average from the list in chapter 5. If everyone had a child just once every century of their lives from age 100 to age 500 (that is, a total of 5 children per person), then by 1656 the population would have been just over 780000. If we allow larger families (and it would actually seem logical to do so, since the account allows childbirth at least from the age of 65 to 500, and one child every 10 years would not seem unreasonable - this birthrate would produce 50 children per couple) then we get the following figures:

No of children per family

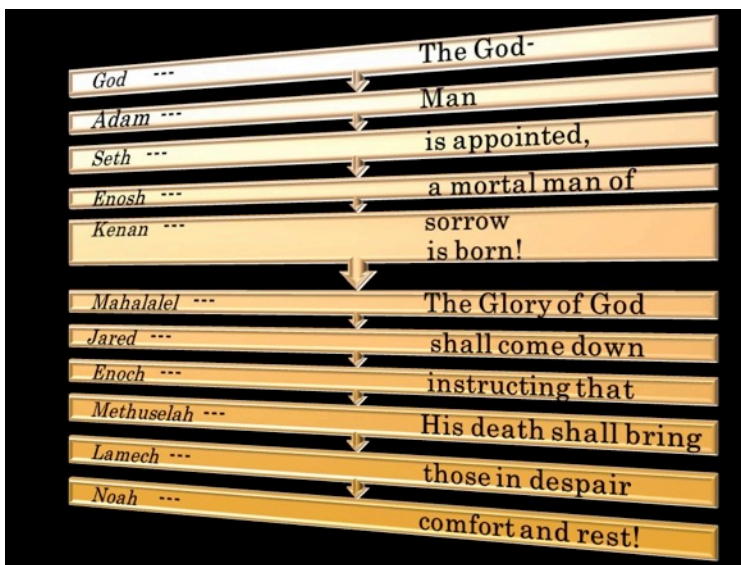
Population by 1656

10
20
50

100 million
256,000,000,000 - which is far more people than there are alive today even!
390,000,000,000,000

At any rate, there were quite a few people around when the Flood came!

The Names of the family are very important too, for they tell a prophetic story; all names in the Old Testament have a strategic meaning. There is a video about this linked on the Lumin website at www.lumin.org.uk/links.html It is produced by 1260d.com The following is a screenshot from that video.



The names of each person with their meaning in English is shown. It is doubly prophetic when they are read together.

Firstly we can see that this is the Gospel account, right there in Genesis chapter 5. God's appointed mortal man of sorrow, the Glory of God who will come down and *His death* will bring comfort and rest!

As with so much Bible prophecy, however, there is a more immediate fulfilment too. When Methuselah dies, the flood comes. That might not sound like something that is full of comfort and rest but it *is* too those in despair (the Godly family of Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah).

According to abarim-publications.com the name **Methuselah** may mean ***When he is dead it shall be sent***, and that can be seen as a prophecy of the Flood.

I am not a linguist, and have to rely on others for the interpretation of names; translation is never an exact science and some interpretation has to be made. "His death shall bring" and "When he is dead it shall be sent" are clearly similar, but differently nuanced. I have no doubt that the Gospel is seen in these names, and if you watch the video referenced above you will see how something similar works with the rest of the line from Noah to Jesus. There is also a lot from the names of the tribes of Israel, and I speak about this in chapter 7 of my book on Revelation ***What's Going On?*** which is available from www.lumin.org.uk

GENESIS//Chapter Six/

Sin breeds evil verses 1, 2 and 4

Chapter four ended with Man beginning to call on God. Now, as chapter six starts, we see that he is turning towards Devilish practices. The Occult is taking hold of Mankind.

Here we have the first mention of girls. That is not to say that there were not girls before this, as we have already considered the Bible does not usually record the births of girls, simply because it was not customary to do so. Yet now girls are mentioned, because the evil beings begin to lust after the daughters of Mankind. The occult had become so rife that there was now sexual involvement between humans and Demons. This resulted in giants, super-humans who were descended from the demons and humans. Sin was now corrupting the very fabric of Mankind, so that, for some humans, they were actually directly descended from evil demonic fathers.

That, at least, is the interpretation following the text of the CEV. Other translators are more careful, the AV has it as 'sons of God' which the NIV agrees with. Commentators argue about whether that phrase means demons or not, after all, why should it?

In the Bible the term 'son of God' refers firstly to Jesus and also applies to those saved by Him; however, in Job 1:6 we read *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.* (AV) The term is used to mean spiritual beings several times within the book of Job, which like Genesis is an ancient writing. It is not until the New Testament that Matthew says "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God*" (Matthew 5:9, AV; other translators have *sons of God*) and John says *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12, AV)

Whether or not you take it that the text is saying fallen angels (demons) are lusting after human women, or instead it is fallen men doing so, what is clear is that this is sin. That suggests to me that there is a demonic aspect as it would not be considered sin for a human man to 'marry the woman he chose' as Genesis 6:2 says.

Enough is enough verses 3 and 5 to 7

So God now initiates a further limitation on Man, from now on 120 years will be his maximum lifetime. Man, created for eternity, would now only live for 120 years. From this time on, if you look at the ages of the people born after this edict, the lifespan drops rapidly. Up to Noah the 'normal' age at death had been in the 900s. After Noah it soon falls, Abraham dies before he reaches 180, and by Moses' time the age limit is seen to be 120. Moses himself was 120 when he died. There are no records today that are verifiable of anyone living longer than 120 years.

An alternative interpretation is that this was the amount of time God set from this moment until the Flood came; there was 120 years left to the human race before the first great judgement fell.

Even that was not enough, however. God became sorry that He had made Mankind, because he was now so wicked. He decided to wipe out Mankind, and all creation with him. In fact, God was hurt, some translations put it that God's heart was '*filled with pain*' (Expanded Bible and International Children's Bible). God has a heart, and God can be hurt. It is important not to forget that in our relationship with Him, for we often hurt Him. Just as a parent is so often wounded by their children (even unintentionally), so God is hurt by us.

Noah verses 8 to 22

BUT God was pleased with Noah! What a testimony to have! God was about to destroy Creation, Mankind and everything else, but God was pleased with Noah! Hebrews chapter 11 tells us that Noah had faith, and this is what pleased God. Can you imagine having faith in that situation?

The world was, to a man, rejecting God. Everybody on the face of the earth was wicked and evil in the sight of God. The occult was everywhere. It was possibly common practice for women to give birth to the children of demons. The thoughts of everyone were evil all the time. Yet Noah trusted God!

How often do you pretend that you are not a Christian when you're the only one in a crowd? Imagine being the only Christian on the face of the earth! Was Noah scared? Possibly, but he had faith, and God was pleased with him! More than that, despite all the temptations around him, all the evil that it must have been so easy to do Noah had no faults. Noah was blameless (v9, NIV), and he was the only good man of his time. He walked in fellowship with God. He was *righteous* before God and *blameless* in his generation, people could not find fault with him.

The people had 'corrupted their ways'. They had done it themselves, and had no-one else to blame for their sins. 1656 years of sin and the world was in a mess! Noah was special, he was a man that God could use, because he had faith in God, because he kept himself pure for God, and because he had fellowship with God. Thank God that we do not live in such a difficult situation as Noah did, for when that happens the end will come. As yet the world is not so evil as it was then, for there is more than one person who is walking with God, but perhaps it is not so very different. Imagine the world in Noah's day to be as ours is now. Think of the levels of violence on our streets, on television, on the soccer terraces (see verse 11). Consider the growing increase in Occult practices, and general disregard for God's laws (e.g. Abortion, Homosexuality, Promiscuity). Imagine all that, and then think of what Noah had to do:

The earth that existed was to be destroyed, but since Noah was righteous God would preserve through him the Human race, and all creation. So he instructed Noah to build an ark or vessel, that would protect him and his family. He gave him specific instructions about how to make it so that it would stand up to the storms it had to go through. It was to be big enough, strong enough and safe enough for Noah and his companions.

Imagine that, in today's situation. You have to build an ark. In modern units it was to be 440 feet (133 metres) long, 72 feet (22 metres) wide and over 40 feet (13 metres) high!



Full size replicas of Ark in Kentucky (top) and Netherlands (bottom)

as a house. You cannot expect to hide it in your back garden. With or without planning permission you'll have to build it in the local park or on the local common. So what's going to happen? People are going to laugh, for a start. There will be vandalism as well. You'll need to mount a guard over night or all your work of the day will be wrecked. The local officials may try to make you stop.

Perhaps God protected the ark as it was built, we do not know. But I am sure that Noah would have faced opposition of every kind. Perhaps his family tried to stop him making a fool of himself. It was not an easy task to complete!

Noah was saved, and with him his family. They were saved because of him, and not because of their own righteousness. Also, a pair from every kind of creature was saved as well. The ark was big enough; perhaps Noah took baby elephants. Baby lions do not kill! Whether or not Noah took baby animals, his job was to collect them. God would see to it that they survived the journey. Finally, the chapter ends with another reminder of what Noah's character was like: Noah did everything that God commanded.

GENESIS//Chapter Seven/

Two by two verses 1 to 3

The work was finished, the Ark was built. Noah was to enter it, together with his family and one pair of each kind of animal and bird for preservation, plus an extra six pairs of birds and ritually clean animals for sacrifices during the journey. It was not yet permissible for Man to eat meat. As we have already seen the Ark was a huge vessel, big enough for the whole company, but even so it must have been full!

Earlier we considered the possibility that the animals on the ark were infants. This is possible, some translations of the Bible have 'a male and his mate', however, which would suggest adult creatures. Either way, once inside, God was quite able to stop any illicit meals!

Seven days wait verses 4 to 10

God created the world in six days, and on the seventh He rested. Now He gives Noah six days to save it, to collect all the animals, and on the seventh day God will destroy it. Today it would be impossible to collect such a range of creatures, but in Noah's day the even climate over the earth meant that all creatures could live in one place. Added to that, God would have been causing them to come to the ark ready for collection. We must not forget that, as we obey God in our natural strength, so He works in Supernatural ways to complete the task. He looks for our obedience and faith and then moves in response to it. So God would have helped Noah in the task that He had given him.

Noah was in no doubt about the purpose of the Flood. It was to destroy all the living beings that God had made. Only those that Noah took on board the ark would be saved. Noah knew his responsibility. Perhaps he tried to warn those around him, who came to mock and jeer. Perhaps he even offered them a place in the ark. If he had the 'heart of an evangelist' he would have done so. But, no-one accepted. Noah, however, did everything the Lord had commanded, and all were safely gathered in. Creation was preserved through Noah.

With one week to go before the rain came Noah and his family made the ark their home. They did not yet seal themselves inside, but continued to gather the creatures. They knew when the Flood would start. Can you imagine the waiting, the jeering outside, the simple trusting faith that Noah must have had? They may not even have known what rain was. We have already seen in chapter 2 that the earth was watered by the fountains of the deep, that is, water below the surface. Rain may never have fallen, yet here was Noah trusting his God that rain would fall, and that it would destroy the earth. The fact that it had never happened before did not shake his faith!

Then it rained verses 11 to 16

Just as God had said, just as Noah believed, it started to rain. It had never rained like it before. It has never rained like it since. It never will. All the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened. This was in every sense a 'Deluge'. After the initial bursting open, rain fell continually on the entire earth for forty days and nights. It has never rained like that since!

On the same day that the rain started, Noah and his family finally boarded the ark as God had commanded. In response to this natural act of faith, God supernaturally sealed them in. No ordinary seal would protect them from what was to come! And then it rained.....

The Flood was a definite event in earth's history. It started on a definite day: the seventeenth day of the second month of Noah's six hundred and first year. Traditionally, perhaps accurately (I don't know!), that is around November 2nd. We call that day ALL SOULS DAY (the 1st is All Saints Day) and some say that this is in memory that on that day All Souls died. The previous day to All Saint's Day, All Saint's or All Hallows Eve (Hallowe'en) has great significance to those who worship or follow the Devil. It was, after all, the last day he had his way on the old earth before it was destroyed!

The second month of the Jewish New Year today begins in early October, so the seventeenth day would be in October, not November. Perhaps, then, the link between All Souls Day and the Flood is at best tenuous, however there is no reason not to remember the Flood specially at this time of the year. All Biblical events are good to bring to mind as we go through the year to remember the things we learn from the Bible.

There is much evidence of a worldwide flood, see the appendix for a list of references. Some object that there is not enough water on the planet to cover the highest mountains. There may not be now, but it is worth remembering two things:

i) There was a lot of Geological activity under the flood waters, the vast outlets of water beneath the earth no longer exist. As these collapsed so the earth's crust would presumably have moved, and mountains may well have been thrust higher than before. At any rate, three quarters of the earth's surface is covered by sedimentary rock, which is water deposited. This includes the tops of most mountains. ('Bone of Contention: Is Evolution True?' Sylvia Baker MSc, pub by Evangelical Press)

ii) There would not be much left other than water on the surface of the earth even today if the Polar Icecaps melted!

Perhaps the greatest evidence of a worldwide flood, to an unbiased observer, is the Fossil record. See the Appendix for a brief discussion of this.

For all things related to Creation, the Flood and a Creationist world view I recommend the videos of American scientist Dr Jason Lisle giving lectures. You can find them on YouTube by searching for his name.

The Flood rises verses 17 to 24

For forty days the water rose. The ark floated, and drifted. It would have been an uncomfortable 'cruise'. It certainly was not calm at least at the beginning (verse 11)! However, even a 'calm' ocean can be pretty choppy. God never claims it is necessarily going to be either easy or pleasant to follow Him. Add to that the noises and smells of the animals, the vast menagerie to look after and feed, and being shut inside for a year it must have been unpleasant at times!

The Bible clearly states the Flood was worldwide. It rose until it was a full 22 feet above the tallest mountain. Three times we are told everything perished. Every living being (every bird, every animal, every person); Everything on earth that breathed; all living beings. That we are told three times that everything died means that there is absolutely no doubt about it: every human, animal and bird throughout the entire planet died, except for those on the ark.

It was a hundred and fifty days before the water started to go down.

Warning to us

Jesus stated that 'The coming of the Son of Man will be like what happened in the time of Noah' (Matt 24:37). Life will go on 'as normal' right up to the time when He comes again. Then, suddenly, this old world will be gone. Just as then, some people will 'mock and will ask "He promised to come, didn't He? Where is He? Our fathers have already died, but everything is the same as it was since the creation of the world!" They purposely ignore the fact that long ago God gave a command, and the heavens and earth were created. The earth was formed out of water and by water, and it was also by water, the water of the flood, that the old world was destroyed. But the heavens and the earth that now exist are being preserved by the same command of God, in order to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the day when godless people will be judged and destroyed' (2 Peter 3.4-7)

GENESIS//Chapter Eight/

God is always there verses 1 to 5

No matter how bad things may get (or may seem to be), God is always right there with us. For one hundred and fifty days the waters did not start going down. But God had not forgotten Noah and all the animals, and caused a wind to start to blow, and for one hundred and fifty days the water gradually went down. God stopped the rain, the outlets beneath the earth and the floodgates above the earth. These floodgates and outlets were probably stopped for good, as such are unknown in this day. Finally the ark comes to rest on Ararat, and the tops of the mountains begin to appear.

That was a long time to be cooped up with all those animals! We have to learn to take the rough with the smooth when following God --we do any way in life-- but for the Christian we can always look forward to the certainty of the Promised Land to come; that may be the ultimate hope of heaven, or a more immediate answer to a situation. Whichever the case, God's promises are sure, and come it certainly will!

God remembered Noah. Amidst all the turmoil He was there. The wind that blew on the waters reminds me of chapter 1 verse 2: as God created the earth so His Spirit moved over the face of the waters then, as he recreates it beneath the flood so His Wind and Spirit move over the face of the flood waters again. God's Presence was certainly with Noah and his vessel!

In case any doubt remains about the extent of the flood, we are told where it was that the ark finally came to rest: on top of Mount Ararat. The modern mountain of that name, in eastern Turkey, is nearly 17000 feet tall (that's about 5500 metres!). Only a truly worldwide flood would be able to cover such a mountain! However, it is known that modern Ararat is fairly young, the result of volcanic activity *since* the time of the Flood. It's part of a mountainous region though, and what the text actually says is that the ark came to rest *somewhere in the Ararat mountains*; even so these are quite tall, and water that covered them would certainly have had to have been part of a global deluge.

Explorers verses 6 to 12

Beneath the flood God had been remaking earth. Gone was Eden, with its angelic guard to keep men out. Even its location was now unknown. The planet that now began to appear would be very different. The extreme northern and southern Poles would be frozen, whilst the equatorial regions would be very hot. Between these two extremes both mankind and the animals had to adapt to their environments.

But first Noah needs to know when to leave the ark. It has already been grounded for 40 days, now he sends out a raven. This bird never returns inside the ark, but waits outside for dry land to appear. One week later and Noah sends out a dove, which does return. Another week and the dove goes out again, this time returning with a sprig of olive. Plants were growing again! Plant life had been able to survive the flood. Seeds often float on water, and even some types of full grown plants and trees would be able to survive a flood for a time. One further week and the dove did not return, it had found a home in the new earth. Now Noah knew he too would soon be able to leave the ark.

Fill the world verses 13 to 19

One year and ten days after getting into the ark, God allowed Noah to leave it. He and his family were the saviours of humanity, for they were all that there now was of humanity. The old, evil world had been wiped out. Now there was a fresh start.

God commanded both Noah (mankind) and the animals and birds to reproduce and fill the earth and spread out over it. From the slopes of Ararat there started a migration of both man and beast across the entire face of the earth. Some animals went one way, others another. Those that preferred a cooler climate headed for such regions. Those that wanted warmer climates spread in those directions. Those who could not find suitable food or conditions died out (perhaps the dinosaurs were on the ark, but died out afterwards). It is not easy to understand why marsupials are only found in Australia, for instance, but we must remember that God would be guiding and guarding the animals as they moved. (Actually, evolutionists do not claim to have absolutely satisfactory answers for problems such as these either).

Thanksgiving

verses 20 to 22

The Pilgrim Fathers gave thanks to God for safe delivery to America in the early days of colonisation. Noah also gives thanks for safe delivery, after a much more dangerous voyage.

God promises that never again will He destroy the earth in this way even though He knows that mankind will again be evil. From now on God promises that the seasons: spring, harvest, summer, winter will always happen. Yet in Noah and his story God was also pointing the way forward to the salvation of the world through Jesus His Son.

GENESIS//Chapter Nine/

The Blessing

verse 1

God now blesses Noah. God's blessing is something that we should all seek. It is, as here, the result of saving faith; that is, it comes from our putting our trust completely on Him.

Following on from the blessing God gives Noah a command.

The purpose of Noah being saved was to re-populate the earth. God did not just do it for Noah, but that through him the world might be continued. God does not bless us just for ourselves, but that through us the world around us might be shown more of the Kingdom of God.

The Command

verses 2 to 7

God commands them to fill the earth. It is part of God's plan that humans are found all over the earth. It was His command to Noah. God reaffirms Man's dominion over the animals. Although Adam had blown it, God again places Man in charge of the animal world. Now, however, He needs to instil a fear into the animals, so that they recognise Man's authority. We can see this fear at work to this day, animals cower away from Man. Even creatures much bigger than ourselves (such as cattle, horses and even most of the 'killer' big cats will back off rather than attack. 'They're more afraid of us than we are of them!').

Now meat becomes part of mankind's diet. All living creatures become food for man, along with the plants he was already eating. The one thing God forbids is to eat meat with blood still in it. I personally think that means whilst the blood is still being pumped around, which would mean whilst the animal is still alive, in order to ensure this the rule became to drain the blood from the carcass before eating.

This commandment is because the blood is the life of the animal. Blood plays an immensely important role later in the salvation of the world: it is the Blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin. In the book of Acts the Apostles reaffirm this command not to eat blood :

eat no food that has been offered to idols; eat no blood; eat no animal that has been strangled; and keep yourselves from sexual immorality (Acts 15 v 29, see also 21 v 25)

Murder was the first of Man's sins that we would today consider to be 'criminal', and God now issues the Death Penalty for murder. If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. There is now no escape. God promises to kill any animal that kills a human, but if a human kills someone else then it is mankind's responsibility to kill that murderer. Later in the Bible God makes provision for accidental killing, but here the command is plain. It is our responsibility to carry out the death penalty to all murderers. It is part of God's command to Noah. If Mankind does not carry out the death penalty to punish murder, then mankind is guilty of disobeying God and must be held responsible for the consequences. That, at any rate, would seem to be the implications of disobedience to God. Notice, however, that it is a command issued to society and not to an individual. Mankind is responsible collectively. Later on Jesus teaches that, as individuals, we do well to '*turn the other cheek*'. Society, however, is not supposed to ignore criminal behaviour!

The Sign

verses 8 to 17

To re-emphasise His promise, and to cause it to be remembered, God gives Noah a sign: the Rainbow. He promises that He will never again destroy life and the earth by a flood. Hence He establishes a Covenant (agreement) with Mankind and all the creatures that came out of the ark. Whenever a rainbow appears in the sky God remembers. The sign is both beautiful and visible, and its rarely ignored even by Man -- but we seldom remember why its there!

In Revelation we see that the rainbow is *continually* in front of God's eyes, He always remembers! (Revelation 4:3)

Alcohol!

verses 18 to 29

All the people on earth are descended from Noah through Shem, Ham and Japheth. No-one is alive today whose family tree does not go back to one of Noah's sons, and through them to Noah (and hence upwards to Adam, of course).

Noah planted a vineyard, to cultivate the Vine. Like many who would follow him, he had a bit to much to drink! No-one is perfect! He lay naked in his tent. Ham came in, saw his father and went to tell the others. They did not rush to look, but carefully covered him up. Ham could have done that, and not told anyone. Instead he publicised Noah's wrongs. How often we do that. As soon as we see someone doing something wrong we tell everyone! Especially if its someone 'good' or important. We like to see other people in trouble. At least half of the daily newspapers are taken up with scandal and news of other people's sin, and how those papers sell!

It might not seem a significant event, but even small things can have great effect. In this one simple act Ham was to cause his descendants much hardship in the future, and bring much trouble to the world. When Noah sobers up, he curses Ham's son Canaan and hence all Ham's descendants. They would be a slave to Shem and Japheth's descendants forever. Ham's offspring would be 3rd rate citizens of earth. If you look ahead to chapter 10 you will see that Ham was the ancestor of the African peoples: the Negroes. Right up to today these have been slaves or regarded as third class citizens, even in their own homelands.....But even though it was a curse issued by Noah in the Bible, it is wrong to use that as an excuse to mistreat the 'children of Ham'. In fact, when Jesus died for us He died to completely free us from the curse of sin, and all other curses we were under. There is complete freedom in Jesus, and that is just as true for the children of Ham as it is for the children of Shem and Japheth (Shem is the ancestor of the Semitic tribes and Japheth of the Indo-europeans). The curse no longer applies. It is a tragedy that, because so many reject Christ, it does still hold sway, but where the Gospel is truly preached and believed there is freedom for all.

Threeness

Notice the importance of three in creation. It is a reflection of the Trinity of God: Three races through Noah's three children; three states of elements (solid, liquid, gas); three parts to Man (body, mind, spirit), etc.

Genesis//Chapter Ten/

The Family of Man

Not only is it possible to say that our ancestor was Shem, Ham or Japheth, but it is even possible to see the various nations of the world taking shape though their children and grandchildren.

Again, we have here a painstaking account, not a loose description of only some of the generations. Nation after nation is listed to show who came from whom.

Eventually all these nations spoke separate languages, but at first they all spoke the language that Noah spoke (probably the same as Adam). Before their languages change, and this look at the beginning of Genesis ends, we must look at the event of chapter eleven.....

Genesis//Chapter Eleven verses 1 to 9 only

The Tower of Babel verses 1 to 4

As Noah's family grew, so they had a common language. At first they spread out over the plains around the Middle East, looking for a good place to live. They were together, and began to gain knowledge and ability. Very soon they had the capability of making brick and mortar. Now they could build larger buildings than small stone huts. Technology was advancing.

It is important to examine their motives for wanting to build this tower. It was to glorify themselves ('*make a name for ourselves*') and so that they would *not be scattered all over the earth*. If you remember in chapter 9 verse 1 God had commanded Noah that his descendants were to 'spread out all over the earth'. So mankind is being deliberately rebellious (again!) when it decided to gather together in one place. It was also setting itself up as God, with no need of the Real God, by building 'up to the sky'. Mankind was saying 'Look what we can do! We're invincible! Aren't we great!'.

The Empire State Building was built in New York, a city where many are gathered, to solve a space problem in one city. The Tower of Babel was to be built to rebel against God in the only city, the only place where many were gathered. Yet it is true that Mankind today is seeking to glorify itself and pays little regard to the One True God. Let this chapter be a warning to those who think that He is not going to do anything about it!

God acts verses 5 to 9

Just when Man thought God wasn't bothered, just when Man thought he could actually get away with disobeying God's command to spread out all over the earth, just when Man thought he could start to glorify himself rather than God, God came down. In those early centuries of our planet's life God often walked on the earth (remember Adam and Enoch?). Now, again, He comes down. Jesus is the Human revelation of God, and it was probably Jesus that 'came down'. What God saw displeased Him. Man was 'going wrong again'.

Yet once more the God of Love, the God of creation, the God Who loves to be called Father, was forced to become the God of Judgement. God now forces Mankind to obey His command of populating the entire earth. Because Man has been disobedient, he loses his common language. Now people in different areas will speak different languages. That was not how it was supposed to have been, and in years to come it would cause suspicion, fighting and deaths. All this, because Man thought he knew best and thought he could get away with disobeying God.

We do not know how God did it. Perhaps various tribes were driven slowly across the planet. Possibly they were instantaneously and supernaturally 'relocated'. We do not know how their languages were confused, whether this happened by natural evolution of words in different ways in different places over the succeeding generations, or whether again this was some instantaneous supernatural intervention. That we do not know how is irrelevant. God did it.

It is interesting that scientists have noticed that there seems to have been 'sudden' appearances of humans in various areas of the world; there are also surprisingly common and similar traditions throughout the world (many tribes have a story of a worldwide flood, for instance). Languages also have very similar ancient roots; and we have already noted that there are only three distinct races of Mankind. Even the references to 'lost cities' (such as Atlantis) could perhaps be a faded memory of the city of Babel, lost to the early post-flood tribes or perhaps to another city destroyed when the Flood came.

So the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis give us an insight into why we are here (and why the world is in such a state!). They also point us forward to the need of Salvation and the hope given to us by Jesus, Who is Himself the Ark that carries us through the storm to the Promised New Earth on the other side. After the first nine verses of chapter eleven the narrative moves forward in time to Abraham. If you look at verses 10 to 26 you will see that, again, a complete record of the generations between Shem and Abraham (Abram) is given. From these it is possible to approximate the dates of the Flood and Creation itself. Bishop

Ussher said that 4004BC is the date for the Creation given by this process, just 6000 years ago, but there is not enough information to be so precise (see appendix).

Earth only being around 6000 years old seems impossible when for years we have been taught that the planet is millions or even billions of years old (and the universe much older), but it is not impossible if we are here because of God's Creation and not evolution. It is worth looking at the evidence for and against the two possibilities, and some suggested books are listed in the appendix. For my part, even if the evidence were totally in favour of evolution (which it certainly is not), I would rather trust the Bible than scientific or geologic evidence, because the Bible is The Word of God and to claim it to be either false or inaccurate is to claim that God is a Liar!

/GENESIS//Appendix/

4004BC?

My Grandfather was born in 1904.

When he was 26 years old my Dad was born.

When he was 25 years old I was born.

How old was I in the year 2000?

There is not enough information to give an exact answer!

You might have said 45, but you would be wrong as I was 42 when the year began and 43 when it ended. Only three generations are involved, but an error of up to 3 years is possible. How? My grandfather was born in December and was aged 26 from December 1930 to December 1931, my father being born in October '31. He was 25 from October 1956 till the following October, and I was born in June 1957.

So you can see that we cannot be precise that by adding up the ages of the people and their fathers we can arrive at 4004 years from Creation to Christ, notwithstanding the fact that the year of Jesus's birth is debated anyway. We have to give a +/- 1 year for each generation.

We can say that creation, according to the dates given in the Old Testament was *approximately* 4,000BC but it could have been quite a few years earlier.

Great ages of early people

When Adam was created it was to live for ever without death, it was his sin that brought death into the world. At first, he and his immediate descendants still had long lives though.

There are some who would claim that the Biblical ages in the early chapters of Genesis are inaccurate, about 10 times too big. Dividing by 10 would make Methuselah, for example, about 97 when he died. This seems to be very nice until you realise that Mahalalel and Enoch would then both have had sons when they were six and a half years old(!), and most of the others were about 10!

One explanation is that the 'outer shield' formed by the '*vast body of water above the earth*' would have protected our early ancestors from the harmful rays from the sun and other bodies in space. It is thought that such cosmic rays are the main reason for ageing. With those filtered out then naturally life would have been longer. After the 'shield' collapsed at the time of the flood, so did the life expectancy of Mankind began to fall rapidly. Shem lived 500 years after the flood, his grandson Shelah lived for 433 years (and died before Shem), Shelah's grandson Peleg was 'only' 239 when he died, and by the time we reach Abraham we read that he died at a '*ripe old age of 175*' (Genesis ch 25 v 7,8). By Moses' time God's ordained 120 years maximum was in force.

If the great ages were to be considered as 'ten times too big', it would be hard to see where we start to consider them correct. Abraham can hardly be said to be 'old' at seventeen and a half!

Fossils and Dinosaurs

The fossil record fits neatly into the Flood story; at least as neatly, if not more so, as it does into the evolution theory. See the list of references at the bottom. Just one interesting find: Trilobites were supposed to have become extinct 600 million years before man evolved. Yet a trilobite fossil found in Utah, USA, is embedded in a shod human footprint. It seems it was squashed by the human!

It is very possible that Dinosaurs lived at the same time as man. In that case at least some (if not all) would have been included on the ark. With that in mind it is interesting to read God's description of the Behemoth and Leviathan in Job chapters 40 and 41. No creature known today fits those descriptions, but certain dinosaurs I can think of do!

References

The easiest to read is 'Bone of Contention: is evolution true?' by Sylvia Baker MSc and published by the Evangelical Press 16 High St Welwyn Herts.

For more on Creation Science visit www.creation.com or www.answersingenesis.org or look at the Jason Lisle Youtube videos referenced above.

