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EVERY
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BIBLE

KJV

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This Bible works with the Filament Bible app, which uses your phone or tablet to enhance this Bible with even more powerful study and devotional content.

WHY USE THE FILAMENT BIBLE APP?

The Filament Bible app illuminates and amplifies this Bible. By simply scanning Filament-enabled page numbers, it instantly delivers helpful, in-depth content centered on the passage you are reading. Study notes, devotionals, videos, profiles, interactive maps, and more enable you to get the most out of your time in God's Word.

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- 1 Grab your device, and open the App Store or Google Play.

- 2 Search for "Filament Bible," and install the app.

- 3 Follow the prompts to learn how it works, and enjoy exploring!

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CANONICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis.....3	2 Chronicles..... 549	Daniel.....1047
Exodus.....83	Ezra.....593	Hosea..... 1071
Leviticus.....139	Nehemiah..... 609	Joel.....1083
Numbers.....179	Esther..... 629	Amos.....1089
Deuteronomy.....233	Job..... 643	Obadiah..... 1103
Joshua.....277	Psalms..... 683	Jonah..... 1107
Judges.....311	Proverbs.....779	Micah..... 1115
Ruth.....347	Ecclesiastes..... 815	Nahum.....1127
1 Samuel.....357	Song of Solomon..... 831	Habakkuk..... 1135
2 Samuel..... 399	Isaiah..... 843	Zephaniah..... 1141
1 Kings.....437	Jeremiah..... 907	Haggai..... 1149
2 Kings.....473	Lamentations..... 971	Zechariah.....1155
1 Chronicles.....511	Ezekiel..... 981	Malachi..... 1171

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew..... 1199	Ephesians..... 1513	Hebrews.....1585
Mark..... 1251	Philippians..... 1525	James.....1605
Luke..... 1285	Colossians..... 1535	1 Peter..... 1615
John..... 1337	1 Thessalonians..... 1543	2 Peter..... 1625
Acts..... 1377	2 Thessalonians..... 1551	1 John.....1633
Romans..... 1431	1 Timothy..... 1557	2 John.....1643
1 Corinthians.....1459	2 Timothy..... 1567	3 John..... 1647
2 Corinthians.....1485	Titus..... 1575	Jude..... 1651
Galatians.....1503	Philemon..... 1581	Revelation.....1655

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

Acts.....	1377	James	1605	Nehemiah	609
Amos.....	1089	Jeremiah.....	907	Numbers	179
1 Chronicles	511	Job.....	643	Obadiah	1103
2 Chronicles.....	549	Joel	1083	1 Peter.....	1615
Colossians	1535	John.....	1337	2 Peter	1625
1 Corinthians	1459	1 John	1633	Philemon	1581
2 Corinthians.....	1485	2 John	1643	Philippians	1525
Daniel	1047	3 John	1647	Proverbs.....	779
Deuteronomy	233	Jonah.....	1107	Psalms	683
Ecclesiastes	815	Joshua.....	277	Revelation	1655
Ephesians.....	1513	Jude.....	1651	Romans	1431
Esther	629	Judges.....	311	Ruth	347
Exodus	83	1 Kings.....	437	1 Samuel.....	357
Ezekiel	981	2 Kings	473	2 Samuel	399
Ezra.....	593	Lamentations.....	971	Song of Solomon	831
Galatians	1503	Leviticus.....	139	1 Thessalonians	1543
Genesis.....	3	Luke	1285	2 Thessalonians.....	1551
Habakkuk.....	1135	Malachi.....	1171	1 Timothy	1557
Haggai	1149	Mark.....	1251	2 Timothy.....	1567
Hebrews.....	1585	Matthew.....	1199	Titus	1575
Hosea	1071	Micah	1115	Zechariah.....	1155
Isaiah	843	Nahum	1127	Zephaniah	1141

WELCOME TO THE Every Woman's Bible

Welcome. You belong here.

I am so glad you opened these pages to see what we have prepared for you, a Bible that invites every woman to explore her story through God's story. Here, in this Bible, I hope you can shed every expectation, role, and fear and hear God's deep, authentic call to extraordinary purpose.

You may be wondering, "How will this Bible live up to the name, *Every Woman's Bible*?" What you hold in your hands is an answer the Lord gave me in prayer: "By having as many women as possible tell their own stories and inviting you to tell your story too." In this Bible, you'll meet a global sisterhood of more than one hundred voices (see the contributors' map, page A19). Each woman tells her story alongside God's story, and these women reflect the diversity of God's creation in their cultures, faces, races, ages, gifts, and vocations. Each book benefits from globally respected women Bible scholars who wrote study notes adding women's perspectives.

When it comes to living our stories, some days we soar toward a great, life-giving mission. On other days we struggle to get off the ground, fighting against our burdens. Sometimes we struggle with our faith or just with ourselves, and other times we feel sure, confident. In many, many ways, each of us is "every woman." We are all these women, just on different days.

As we open this Bible, we might fear we'll meet women who are nothing like us. We fear feeling different, divided by political convictions, social issues, bank accounts, facial lines, or body sizes. But God's love letter for us, the Bible, speaks life to our social-media-airbrushed anxieties. God's love letter is for every woman. When we open this Bible, we hear God through his story and through others' stories.

I pray the Bible's story and these women's stories cheer you on to live abundantly and serve extravagantly. I pray they help you go deeper in God's story—available to all of us, new every day, no matter what our stories have been before.

Additionally, in the middle of this Bible (page 1180), you'll find a unique section that walks you through a proven journey to find your purpose in God's purpose, your story in God's story.

As you journey through these pages, we want to be right alongside so you come to say, "I'm living what God made me for, alongside other women who make me strong." We want you to feel guided toward action! We want you to feel rooted in God, strengthened in your relationships, and activated in God's calling, his world-renewing cause.

Sister, you have a story. A story that matters. I can't wait to hear your voice.

With my ordinary and God's extraordinary,
DR. NAOMI CRAMER OVERTON
GENERAL EDITOR

Every Woman's Bible

USER'S GUIDE

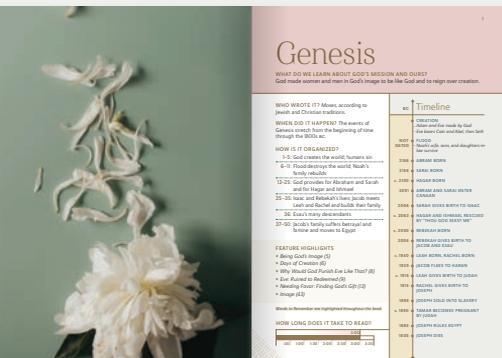
The *Every Woman's Bible* focuses on what hundreds of women say they desire from a Bible: great study notes and information from maps and charts, clarity on their calling, insights from others' stories, and help for their needs. This begins with the Word of God in the King James Version, which draws us into the story of God with language that has spoken to women for generations.

Globally respected Bible scholars, who also happen to be women, provide the study notes and walk alongside you on your journey through God's story and your story. This Bible contains an array of illustrations and charts, including original ones written by women. This Bible also offers writings by women from many places, stages, and walks of life.

For a full list of each of these writings, see the indexes beginning on page 1697.

INTRODUCTION

Before each of the Bible's sixty-six books you will find:



BEAUTY To help you prepare visually for what you'll read, a full-page image draws on the themes and feel of each book.

MISSION To help you consider what each book has to say about God's purposes and your own, look for a key takeaway on *God's mission and ours*.

HISTORY *Who, When, and How* questions orient you to each book. Timelines give you further historical context, showing what events were happening at the time.

ESTIMATED READING TIMES To show you how much time to budget, these estimates are divided into thirty-minute segments.

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS A sampling of articles on purpose and calling, identity, needs, and wonderings. They spotlight topics you've told us you care about, illuminating the Bible's story through the lens of women scholars and writers who make Scripture more relatable.

STUDY NOTES Each respected Bible scholar—all of whom are women—applied her research and cultural understanding of the ancient world to craft these notes. The scholars particularly focused the notes and additional commentary on portions of Scripture which address topics women might find relevant, fascinating, and helpful and zeroed in on aspects that women might silently struggle with but that are rarely addressed. These notes clarify the cultural, historical, and literary context we all need so we can read the Bible with greater understanding.

27:1-46 Jacob, w. deception from his i to deceive his father, firstborn before he di faithfully; Isaac discr of Ishmael; Esau i and Rebekah actd Jacob away (27:4-47)



DIGGING DEEPER INTO IMAGE

LIVING GOD'S MISSION THROUGH OUR FOUR CORE RELATIONSHIPS

We are made for relationships—with God, our family and friends, our communities, and our own place of unique influence. Our relationships form us at least as much as we shape them! Understanding these relationships, and how we can invest in their health and purpose, allows us to thrive and live out our God-given callings. Through these relationships, we see how those around us and we ourselves are made in the image of God and how to share that with the world.

THEOS MY STORY WITH GOD

The Greek word *Theos* means “God,” and in this sphere we can discover our extraordinary purpose in the God whose faithful love defines each of us. This place of relationship is just for you and God. One central way we get to know God is through his Word, the Bible—and he invites us to join his mission.

OIKOS MY STORY WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

The Greek word *Oikos* means “home” or “household.” But this sphere, so dear to many of us, can consume us, bringing us comfort and life or struggle and grief (often both). The Bible shows us complicated family and friend dynamics, where God can reveal how he wants us to relate to each other in ways that yield life.

KOINONIA MY STORY WITH COMMUNITY, WORKPLACE & CHURCH

The Greek word *Koinonia* means “fellowship,” and this sphere comes naturally to some. It’s a place we can find fulfillment. And yet, these relationships can also develop places of deep hurt, burnout, and avoidance. God can show us how to develop this sphere intentionally so that our neighborhoods, workplaces or schools, and churches thrive. And we thrive, too.

SHALOM MY STORY OF MY UNIQUE INFLUENCE

The Hebrew word *Shalom*, at its simplest, means “peace.” However, this word carries an even greater depth of meaning beyond our language. This sphere relates to our contentment, completeness, wholeness, well-being, and harmony, which come from expressing our unique calling in God’s mission.

HOW TO EXPLORE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When I (Naomi) was a little girl, I wanted to know God. So I grabbed the little Bible someone at church had handed me, and at night, I'd open it up and read it all alone. One time, I remember praying one enormously powerful prayer in my dark room: "God, if you're real, I am desperate to know you. Will you help me?" He did by showing me in the Bible how I didn't live up to the good ways God asked me to live, particularly that part about loving others as myself.

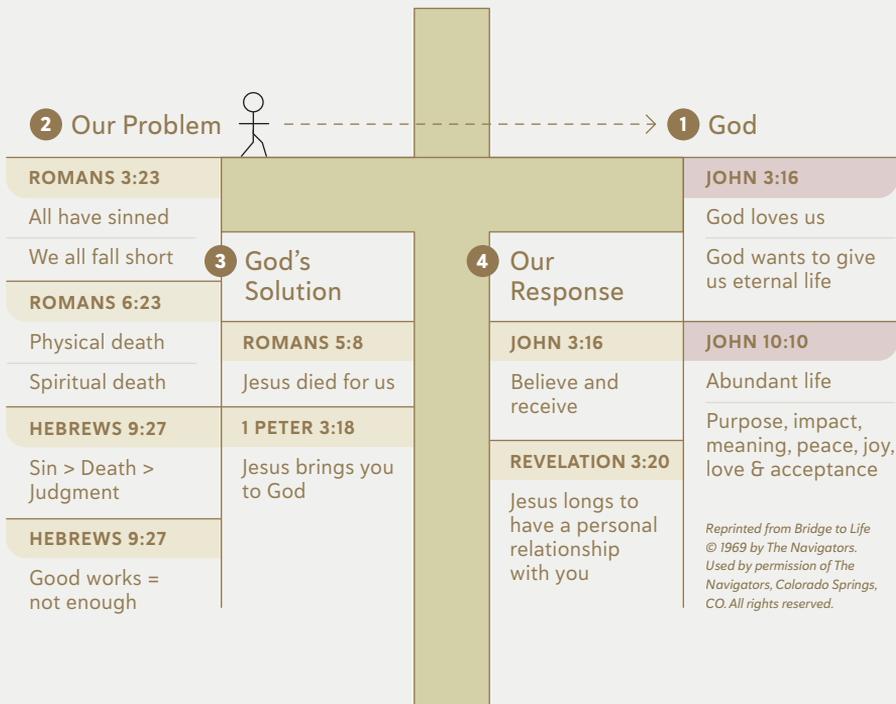
Thankfully, in college, my friend Beth invited me to a group where I heard about how to know God in a way I never had before. I told Beth, "I'm a Christian, but I don't understand why so many people always talk about Jesus." Beth explained that the gap between how I wanted to live and the way I really did live was a gap Jesus came to fill.

The diagram below shows how Jesus and his death on the cross bridges the gap between our problem with sin and being with God. God's greatest act of drawing close to us is in his Son, Jesus. Sin, or falling short of living and loving perfectly, separates us from God (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12), but Jesus came to earth and lived a perfectly loving and just life so he could draw us to God.

Jesus paid for our wrongdoing by dying in our place on the cross, but he did not stay dead! He returned to life forever and now offers us forgiveness for our sins and new life, too. Jesus is alive today and wants to give us a new life:

*"If any man **be** in Christ, **he is** a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



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Do you ever feel like I felt, like you long to be close to God but don't know how that can happen? What will you do with the God who pursues you, covers your wrongs, heals your heart, and invites you to new life now and forever? How do we begin this new life he offers? By trusting Jesus. If you're ready to believe in God's good purpose for you and your story, you can begin by telling him so in prayer. Here's a simple and memorable way to pray:

CONFESS: We confess that we have fallen short of living a perfectly loving and just life. We tell God that we cannot earn his forgiveness, cannot be good enough on our own, and are ready to stop trying. We accept the free gift of our new life and ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to lead our life. **ROMANS 10:9-13, PAGE 1446**

BELIEVE: We believe that God loves us so much that he gave what he loved most—his Son, Jesus—to pay the life sentence for our sin. **JOHN 3:16, PAGE 1342** We agree that he saves us not because of good things we have done but because of his undeserved kindness. Because of God's kindness and love, we have confidence that God makes us new from the inside out in this life and gives us everlasting life with him after we die. **TITUS 3:4-7, PAGE 1578**

ACCEPT: We accept that God forgave us and brought us close when we confessed and believed. We accept that we can't take credit for it. We accept that we are God's masterpiece, now living with new life thanks to Jesus. And we embrace the good things God has planned for us to do. **EPHESIANS 2:8-10, PAGE 1514**

When we believe in and trust Jesus, he pens new stories for us. God retitled mine from “She Is Striving and Stuck” to “She Is Accepted and Free.” Do you want to begin this new story, this new life? You might pray something like this:

Father, I confess I fall short of being perfectly loving and just, as you are. I believe you sent your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and pay entirely for all my sin. I call on Jesus as Lord and accept your gift of life now, with your Spirit living in me, and life with you forever in your Kingdom. I pray this in your Son's name, Jesus. Amen (an affirmation that means “So be it!”).

So, sister, I don't want you to do what I did—read this book alone in the dark. Don't wait to feel close to the Author of the story and the Creator of you. You can know God now by asking him to forgive you and give you new life. If you've done so, then you are a child of God (1 John 3:1) and you have become a new person. You are never alone because God is always with you.

Turn to page A16 for more help getting started reading your Bible!

WHERE TO START READING THE BIBLE

Opening the Bible can be intimidating or confusing. It's hard to know exactly where to start! And not every way of reading the Bible works for everyone in every life season. It's good to try different ways, and it's okay to try a new one if you get stuck. Below are some ideas for how to get started.

START WITH A SIMPLE READING PLAN

We've provided a daily Bible reading plan that helps you read the whole Bible in one year (see page 1683). Each day offers portions from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. If you'd like to follow along, the readings might take you about ten to twenty minutes a day.

START WITH JESUS

Each of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tells the story of the life of Jesus from a different perspective. These books are a good place to start because they show us who Jesus is and what his plans are for the world. Choose any one and get started: Matthew begins on page 1199; Mark begins on page 1251; Luke begins on page 1285; and John begins on page 1337.

START WITH WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

Turn to “What Is My Purpose?” on page 1180. This is a guide to help you know where you are right now in your story with God and discover where you want to go next. This guide focuses especially on your four core relationships (see page A13): your relationship with God, your relationship with family and friends, your relationship with community, workplace, and church, and your unique influence.



START WITH CORE RELATIONSHIPS AND WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

If you want to see how the Bible can guide your relationships, check out the Image articles and use the Scripture passages they cover and their devotionals as a place to begin reading. You can explore the topics within each sphere by turning to page 1700.



START WITH A BIBLE WOMAN YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT

The Identity articles help you learn from others' stories. Each Identity article pairs with the Bible references where that woman is mentioned or her story is told. See page 1703 for a full list of these women and where you can find their features.



START WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING RIGHT NOW

The Come Close articles tend to your heart. Those times we feel uncomfortable can offer us good opportunities for God to make us stronger. Turn to page 1706 and look for a topic or theme that speaks to you.



START WITH YOUR TOUGH QUESTIONS

God is not afraid of your most challenging questions, and the Perspective articles show how the Bible can answer them too. Go to page 1708 for a list of these questions and the Bible verses they cover, and take on some of the big ones you wonder about. We didn't shy away from hard passages. We purposely asked knowledgeable scholars and writers to dive into every bit that could put a woman off from reading the Bible.

BASIC BIBLE HELPS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Old Testament and the New Testament are separated by time, and each focuses on different eras in God's story. See page A7 for a list of which books are in each group.

The Old Testament takes place between Creation and 445 BC. It includes historical narratives like the creation account, the Flood account, the origin of the Israelites (God's chosen people group), chronologies of Israel's rulers and records of political changes. It also includes poetry and wise sayings in books like Psalms and Proverbs. God's encouragements and warnings to his people from his prophets also appear in the Old Testament.

Between the Old Testament and New Testament, there is a gap in the biblical record of about four hundred years.

The New Testament takes place between approximately 7 BC and AD 100. It includes books about the life of Jesus, the historical account of the beginning of the Christian church, letters to early churches about their new life in Jesus Christ, and the apocalyptic book of Revelation, describing John's vision about Jesus' final return.

HOW TO LOOK UP A VERSE



Bible verse references are a human-made system for navigating the Bible. The first part is the Bible book name (either from the Old Testament or the New Testament). The second part is the chapter number (the number before the colon). And the third part is the verse number or span (the number[s] after the colon).

JOHN 3:16

BOOK JOHN	New Testament book, found toward the back of the Bible
CHAPTER 3	The third chapter of the Gospel of John
VERSE 16	The verse labeled 16 within that chapter

See page A7 for a list of the Bible books in the order they appear and the page numbers they start on.

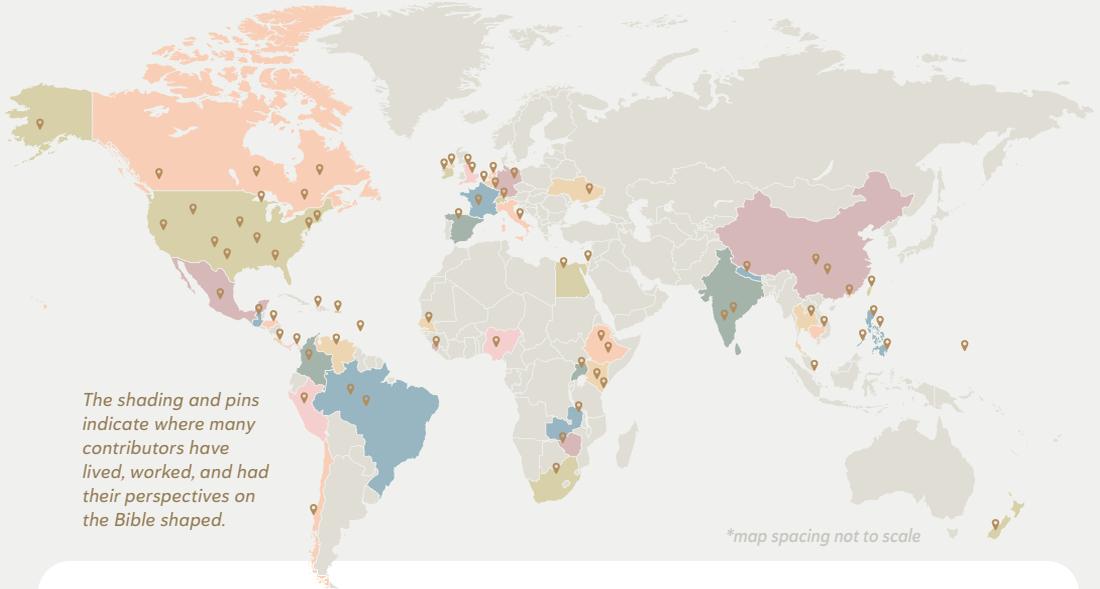
See page A8 for an alphabetical list of the Bible books and the page numbers they start on. Once you've found the book, then turn to the chapter, and finally the verse.

BIBLE READING WORKSHEET

Taking notes while reading the Bible can help us remember what we've learned, come back to it later, and see how we are growing in knowing—and living from—God's story. Here is an example page you can use to take notes. You can also find a downloadable version of this on our website EveryWomansBible.com that you can use time and again.

DATE	
BIBLE PASSAGE	
WHO IS THIS ABOUT?	
WHEN & WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?	
WHAT DO I UNDERSTAND?	WHAT DO I <u>NOT</u> UNDERSTAND?
Is there a study note or article that helps me? <i>See indexes on page 1697.</i>	
WHAT CAN I ACT ON TODAY?	

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



I (Naomi) am most excited about inviting you to discover God’s story and your story alongside others who help you know you’re not alone. Let’s begin by meeting the scholars who wrote the study notes and some of the other articles (especially Perspective articles, see page 1708 for a full list) to help answer our difficult questions.



CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, YouTuber, and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California. ♦ **GENESIS, EXODUS**



JENNIFER BROWN JONES, PhD, is an author, speaker, and instructor of Old Testament for Liberty University’s PhD of Bible Exposition program. She loves helping others see how God speaks to them through the Bible today. ♦ **LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS**



SHIRLEY SIONG SHU HO, PhD, is assistant professor of Old Testament at China Evangelical School of Theology in Taiwan. She loves teaching and mentoring students. She is a Langham scholar. ♦ **JOSHUA**



HAVILAH DHARAMRAJ, PhD, serves at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India. Her research interests include biblical narrative and comparative literature.

She encourages her students to retrieve traditional storytelling methods for ministry. ♦ **JUDGES, OBADIAH, JONAH, ZEPHANIAH, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI**



ALEXIANA FRY, MDiv, PhD, is a devoted academic in the Hebrew Bible. She is a professor, wife, and pug mom who is working on her first book post-dissertation. ♦ **RUTH, 1 SAMUEL, 2 SAMUEL**



JENNIFER M. MATHENY, PhD, is associate professor of Old Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Missouri, and director of the Wynkoop Center for Women in Leadership. She enjoys speaking engagements and research. ♦ **1 KINGS, 2 KINGS, 1 CHRONICLES, 2 CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SOLOMON, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH**



CATHERINE L. McDOWELL, PhD, is associate professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She has authored several books and articles on Bible backgrounds, Genesis, Isaiah, and Biblical Hebrew. ♦ **LAMENTATIONS, HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, NAHUM, HABAKKUK, MALACHI**



CHRISTINE WALKER, MDiv, is a spiritual director who facilitates spiritual formation sessions for people desiring to grow their relationship with Christ. She loves ancient languages and teaches Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek. ♦ **EZEKIEL, DANIEL, MICAH**



ESTHER G. CEN, MDiv, PhD, is a follower of Christ and multilingual writer and teacher, currently serving as assistant professor of biblical studies at Seattle Pacific University and Seminary. ♦ **MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN**



LYNN H. COHICK, PhD, is Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Director of Houston Theological Seminary, where she leads the Doctor of Ministry program. She writes, speaks, and teaches internationally. ♦ **ACTS, ROMANS, 1 CORINTHIANS, 2 CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS, EPHESIANS**



SARAH HARRIS, PhD, lectures in New Testament at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand. She is a scholar who specializes in the Gospel of Luke. She loves to teach, preach, and encourage women in their callings. ♦ **PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, 1 THESSALONIANS, 2 THESSALONIANS, 1 TIMOTHY, 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, PHILEMON, HEBREWS, JAMES, 1 JOHN, 2 JOHN, 3 JOHN**



CHEE-CHIEW LEE, PhD, is associate professor in New Testament at Singapore Bible College, and her passion is studying the Word of God and sharing its life-transforming message with people. ♦ **1 PETER, 2 PETER, JUDE, REVELATION**



For a time in my life, after some painful diagnoses came to our family and the death of one of our children, I felt too sad to read the Bible by myself. When I'd open the pages, I just wanted a friend to take me by the hand and say, "Here, read this. I've felt pain like yours too. And God's Word has something that you need today, Naomi. Here it is." Below are women who can point you to God's story and how it connects with your story. While several of the scholars listed above also share their stories with you, here are the additional writers, listed by first-name alphabetical order. If you'd like to find a particular contributor's writings, see the Contributors Index on page 1718.



ADELAIDE MANYARA MUCHETU shares true life experiences with many women and believes in relational evangelism. Discipleship is her mantra with exhortation being her greatest strength.



ALEXANDRA KUYKENDALL is a cofounder of The Open Door Sisterhood and author of several books, including *Seeking Out Goodness: Finding the True and Beautiful All around You*.



ALICE PATTERSON, JD, is an associate court attorney in New York who has a fondness for teaching the Old Testament. She encourages everyone to put down the world's lies and put on God's truth.



AMANDA AZADIAN is a Christ follower on a mission to bridge traditional medicine and modern innovation. She is a doctoral student of acupuncture, a senior product manager in digital health strategy, and a lover of adventure.



AMY SIMPSON, MBA, is the Bible publisher at Tyndale House Publishers, and she can't think of a better job than making God's Word available and accessible around the world.



ANDREA GIBSON is a certified coach and trainer. She and her husband spent seventeen years church planting. Her deepest desire now is to mentor and train women in the art of wise, godly leadership.



ANGELA TKACHENKO is an evangelist, worshiper, and leader of Steiger Ukraine mission. She is passionate to see this generation love the Bible.



AVA JAMES is an editor who advocates for living with compassion and respect.



BELÉN PETERS is a mobilizer with Scatter Global. Since 2002, she has been mobilizing mission-minded Latinos to take their passion and profession to places where Christ is unknown.



BRENDA GARCIA de BRIZENDINE is the former communications manager for Compassion International's Guatemala office. She works with Iron Rose Sister Ministries and also interprets Spanish for CPCD-Head Start in Colorado Springs, CO.



BRENDA L. YODER, MA, LMHC, is a licensed mental health counselor and school counselor whose passion is encouraging others when life doesn't fit the storybook image.



CARA DAY is a writer and illustrator. She has served with Stonecroft Ministries helping women live “extraordinary.”



CATHY SCRIVNER has twenty-five years of experience as a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant. She is a devoted Christian who believes in loving people to Christ.



DAISY ASIIMWE BYARUGABA is a learning and development professional passionate about empowering people to become the most productive version of themselves that God intended. She and her husband minister at Church of the Resurrection, Bugolobi, in Kampala, Uganda.



DEBORA DA SILVA is from Brazil and found release from poverty through Compassion International. She works with Facebook in Colombia and lives to serve as she tries to be a channel—not only a recipient—of God’s goodness.



DELANEY OVERTON develops programs and business strategies for impact-oriented organizations in education, food access, environmentalism, and other sectors. She experiences God’s love and glory through creation, especially the seemingly unending ocean.



DONNA LEE LAMOTHE, MA, is executive director and founder of inSPIRE Channels at RSVP Ministries. She teaches and guides all to find wholeness through faith in Jesus.



ELISA MORGAN, MDiv, speaks, writes, and cohosts podcasts for Our Daily Bread Ministries. For twenty years, she served as president of MOPS International, now as president emerita. Her motto is “Living really . . . Really living.”



ELISABETH SELZER ROGERS, MDiv, MA, PhD, is a passionate believer and follower of Christ, bringing his love to the secular world through mentoring, coaching, and modeling his unconditional love.



ELIZA CORTÉS BAST, DEd candidate, is senior director of programs with Stonecroft. She is a pastor, professor, wife, mom, and mentor. She believes in passionately pursuing God and people by developing talent, asking strategic questions, and amplifying the good.



ELIZABETH GLANVILLE, PhD, is retired faculty from Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Mission and Theology. She is an international teacher on missions and leadership and chaplain for a local police department and her retirement community.



ELLEN RICHARD VOSBURG, MA, is a Bible editor for Tyndale House Publishers. She studied Greek and Hebrew and lives to lead others into God’s deep love by getting to know him through his Word.



EMILY SARMIENTO is a wife and mom of two school-aged children and serves as president and CEO of Tearfund USA, based in Denver, CO.



ESTHER FLEECE ALLEN is an international speaker and bestselling author of *No More Faking Fine: Ending the Pretending and Your New Name: Saying Goodbye to the Labels That Limit*.



EVIE POLSLEY, MS, loves stories of how God uses everyday people. A digital communications manager at Tyndale, her favorite roles are wife to the good doctor and mom to two girls who will one day change the world.



GABRIELA MAGAÑA BANKS, PhD, is an author, teacher, and certified HeartSync inner healing prayer minister who facilitates freedom. Biblical principles and powerful moves of the Holy Spirit are her passion.



HÉLÈNE M. DALLAIRE, PhD, serves as Earl S. Kalland Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Denver Seminary. She is deeply involved in the Messianic movement, serving in worship, prayer, teaching, and preaching.



IRENE PACE trusts the Lord Jesus Christ and believes his life-changing message of salvation. She writes about God’s lessons learned through adversity; she speaks with gratitude and joy.



JANICE MAYO MATHERS is author of multiple books and Bible studies, including *Every Season: Embracing a Forever Kind of Purpose* (Stonecroft) and *Mothers-in-Law vs. Daughters-in-Law: Let There Be Peace*. She helps women see adverse circumstances as godly challenges.



JENNIFER KELLER, MA Min, is a pastor at a multisite church in Central Indiana and has self-published three Bible studies. She is a devoted Christ-follower, wife, and mom of four.



JENNIFER ROSNER, PhD, is a writer and Messianic Jewish theologian currently serving as Affiliate Assistant Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. Much of her work focuses on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.



JULIE WRIGHT is author of *Redeeming Eve: When a Woman Lives Loved* and founder of Live Loved Ministry. Her passion is for women to embrace God’s love and cultivate an authentic relationship with Jesus.



KARA POWELL, PhD, is the executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute and chief of leadership formation at Fuller Theological Seminary. Kara speaks and has authored numerous books, including *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager*.



KAT ARMSTRONG, MA, is a Bible teacher, preacher, coach, and ministry leader. She cofounded the Polished Network and authored *No More Holding Back, The In-Between Place*, and the Storyline Bible Studies series.



KATHERINE LEARY ALSDORF founded and directed Redeemer Church's Center for Faith & Work. She co-authored *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* with Timothy Keller.



KATHERINE WOLF is a communicator, author, and advocate. She leverages her redemptive story to encourage those with broken bodies, broken brains, and broken hearts.



KATRIEL OVERTON is a Christian with autism who experiences and believes all people can feel and know God's love if they choose. She sees God helping her love people, including herself.



KRISTIN CARY, CPSAS, cofounded Living Truth with her husband. She guides women toward hope and healing after the devastating impact of sexual betrayal in their marriage.



LILLIAN GITAU is a lifelong learner and an advocate for the marginalized. She finds satisfaction from seeing others realize their full potential. She is the author of *You Are Special* and *Pia Was Different*.



LISA D. EDMONDS is mother of two daughters, a Stonecroft Ministries speaker and speaker trainer, worship leader, and constituent care director for The Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.



LISA WHITTLE is a sought-out Bible teacher, podcast host, and bestselling author whose works include *Jesus Over Everything*. She is the founder of the online communities Ministry Strong and Called Creatives. She's a wife, mom, and a self-professed feisty work in progress.



LOIS NANGUDI, MA, studied spiritual formation and discipleship at Moody Seminary. She served as an advocate with Compassion International, founded Awaken To Follow, and is currently serving in the Pastors Discipleship Network.



LORINA AVENIDO, BEd with CAR, has served for thirty-seven years as a full-time pastor/missionary of Philippine Good News International Inc. She is a licensed minister of Worldwide Impact Group, preaching the gospel and empowering women leaders.



LYNN LONG has studied at National Louis University and is completing her doctorate at Wheaton College. Lynn is a Native American writer and speaker with Stonecroft Ministries.



MANDY ARIOTO is the president and CEO of MOPS International, influencing millions of moms around the world every year. She is a scholar of Greek, author, and speaker who believes in the transformational power of Scripture.



MARGARET FITZWATER, MS, MBA, is a Navigator and life and leadership coach. Her passion is helping others live and lead from the Word to thrive in their lives and ministries.



MARY SCHALLER, MDiv, is the former president of Q Place and coauthor of *The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations*. Her life mission is to build and nurture Christ-centered communities.



MAY YOUNG, MDiv, PhD, is an associate professor of biblical studies at Taylor University, with a passion for discipleship, teaching, and writing.



MEGAN C. ROBERTS, PhD, teaches Old Testament at Prairie College in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada. She loves mountains, music, and the unending joy of discovering the depths of the gospel in Scripture and the church.



MELISSA HOUDMANN is the cofounder of GotQuestions Ministries, a website dedicated to answering Bible questions. She also wrote Stonecroft Ministries' *Why Believe* study.



MENCHIT WONG, MBA, is a Gallup-certified Strengths Coach and leadership consultant. She also serves on the leadership of global mission movements that enable children to be disciples of Jesus.



MILLIE SERRANO is a faithful follower of Jesus Christ devoted to supporting women in their pursuit of growing a biblical, strong, and fruitful relationship with God through his Son, Jesus.



MINDY CALIGUIRE is founder and president of Soul Care, dedicated to increasing soul health in the Body of Christ. Her books include *Discovering Soul Care* and *Spiritual Friendships*.



MISTY ARTERBURN is an author and speaker, contributing to Bible projects, devotionals, and recovery materials for over twenty years. Wife and mom to five, Misty is the founder of Recovery Girls and the general editor of *The One Year Bible for Women*.



NANCY CHAMBERLIN SPROWLS is a devotional writer, mother, and grandmother. She encourages women to have a passion for God's Word and to leave a spiritual legacy for their families.



NAOMI CRAMER OVERTON, MBA, DIS, lives to realize beauty-filled visions that lift us to flourishing, with our families and beyond. Naomi has been CEO for Stonecroft and MOPS, director with Compassion International and World Vision, and General Editor for this Bible.



PATRICIA RAYBON is an award-winning Colorado author, essayist, and novelist who writes top-rated books and stories at the daring intersection of faith, race, and mystery—including the Annalee Spain mystery series.



QUANTRILLA ARD, PhD, is a faith-based personal and spiritual development author, speaker, Bible teacher, and literary agent who believes in the power of collective strength, community, and fellowship.



RACHEL LINDSAY McCANTS is an author, speaker, and founder of R. Lindsay Unlimited, which encourages, inspires, and challenges ladies to raise their self-worth and standards and to walk in God's will, in Jesus' name.



ROBIN REESE is a volunteer leader with Stonecroft Ministries. She and her husband, Terry, love to travel, enjoy the company of their son and two corgis, and live life to the fullest!



SARA HALL is a professional marathon runner and cofounder of the Hall Steps Foundation. She has been competing professionally for seventeen years in various distances and using her platform to bring aid to orphaned children in Ethiopia.



SARAH OVERTON, MA, is a researcher specializing in refugee and asylum policy. She has worked in the UK Parliament, public-policy think tanks, and at Lambeth Palace.



SHARON WILHARM is the host of the *All God's Women* podcast and internationally syndicated radio show. She loves bringing to life stories of Bible women and providing takeaways for modern women.



STEPHANIE THOMAS is a follower of Jesus Christ. She is the coordinator and a contributing author at Pruned Life. She is also a gospel singer.



SUSAN I. BUBBERS, MDiv, DMin, PhD, is the Dean of the Center for Anglican Theology in Orlando, FL. She is a professor, Anglican priest, spiritual director, and a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics.



SUSAN M. JONES is a US Army veteran, native Alaskan, wife, mother, and follower of Jesus Christ. She shares her testimony with Stonecroft Ministries. Sprinkling the love of Jesus is her joy.



SUSIE GAMEZ, MA, is a teaching pastor at Midtown Covenant Church in Sacramento, CA, and preaches across the country, making the reconciling love of Jesus come alive through the Scriptures.



SUZY SHEPHERD is the founder of SHINE, creator of Stonecroft's Where Love Lives outreach experience, and mom to a blended tribe of nine. She finds great joy in creating experiences for people to know God's love.



TAMI HEIM is president and CEO of Christian Leadership Alliance and serves on many non-profit boards. She and her husband lead mission teams to Haiti to love and disciple orphans.



TONI J. COLLIER is a speaker, the founder of Broken Crayons Still Color, the host of the *Still Coloring* podcast, and the author of *Brave Enough to Be Broken: How to Embrace Your Pain and Discover Hope and Healing*.



TRACI CROWDER is a joyful, energetic, Jesus-following wife, mom, and pastor. She serves with Stonecroft and deeply longs for every person to experience God's extraordinary in their ordinary, together in community.



VALERIE BELL is an author of several books on children, including *RESILIENT: Child Discipleship and the Fearless Future of the Church*. Valerie serves as Awana's CEO emerita and 2050 vision caster.



VANEETHA RENDALL RISNER is the author of *Walking Through Fire*. She and her family live in North Carolina, where she writes and speaks about how God meets us in suffering.



VIRGINIA WARD, MA, DMin, serves as the Dean of the Boston Campus for Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She is a wife, a mother, and an associate pastor at Abundant Life Church in Cambridge, MA.



VIVIAN MABUNI is a national speaker, author of *Open Hands, Willing Heart*, and podcast host of *Someday Is Here* for AAPI Christians, with over thirty years of ministry experience.



WHITNEY PUTNAM is the senior director of women's events and marketing at New Life Ministries. She is an overall joy-chaser and is often found dancing in her kitchen.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

GENERAL EDITOR

Dr. Naomi Cramer Overton

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Misty Arterburn

PROJECT DEVELOPER & EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Stephen Arterburn

PUBLISHER

Amy Simpson

TYNDALE HOUSE EDITOR

Ellen Richard Vosburg

DEVELOPMENTAL EDITORS

Mark R. Norton
Jonathan Bryant

COPY EDITORS

Ava James
Leanne F. Rolland
Susan F. Tristano
Charles E. Cruise

PROOFREADING

Peachtree Publishing Services

DESIGNER

Jennifer L. Phelps

TYPESETTING

Laura Cruise



EPISTLE DEDICATORY FOR THE AUTHORISED KING JAMES VERSION

TO THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE

JAMES

BY THE GRACE OF GOD

KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND,

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, &C.

THE TRANSLATORS OF THE BIBLE WISH GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

Great and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of *England*, when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well unto our *Sion*, that upon the setting of that bright *Occidental Star*, Queen *Elizabeth* of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known, who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the *Sun* in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we beheld the Government established in Your Highness, and Your hopeful Seed, by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquility at home and abroad.

But among all our joys, there was no one that more filled our hearts, than the blessed continuance of the preaching of God's sacred Word among us; which is that inestimable treasure,

which excelleth all the riches of the earth; because the fruit thereof extendeth itself, not only to the time spent in this transitory world, but directeth and disposeth men unto that eternal happiness which is above in heaven.

Then not to suffer this to fall to the ground, but rather to take it up, and to continue it in that state, wherein the famous Predecessor of Your Highness did leave it: nay, to go forward with the confidence and resolution of a Man in maintaining the truth of Christ, and propagating it far and near, is that which hath so bound and firmly knit the hearts of all Your Majesty's loyal and religious people unto You, that Your very name is precious among them: their eye doth behold You with comfort, and they bless You in their hearts, as that sanctified Person who, under God, is the immediate Author of their true happiness. And this their contentment doth not diminish or decay, but every day increaseth and taketh strength, when they observe, that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of *Christendom*, by writing in defence of the Truth, (which hath given such a blow unto

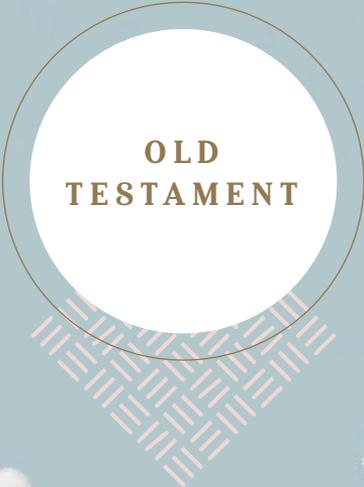
that man of sin, as will not be healed,) and every day at home, by religious and learned discourse, by frequenting the house of God, by hearing the Word preached, by cherishing the Teachers thereof, by caring for the Church, as a most tender and loving nursing Father.

There are infinite arguments of this right Christian and religious affection in Your Majesty; but none is more forcible to declare it to others than the vehement and perpetuated desire of accomplishing and publishing of this work, which now with all humility we present unto Your Majesty. For when Your Highness had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the *English Tongue*; Your Majesty did never desist to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require.

And now at last, by the mercy of God, and the continuance of our labours, it being brought unto such a conclusion, as that we have great hopes that the Church of *England* shall reap good fruit thereby; we hold it our duty to offer it to Your Majesty, not only as to our King and Sovereign, but as to the principal Mover and Author of the work: humbly craving of Your most Sacred

Majesty, that since things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of ill-meaning and discontented persons, it may receive approbation and patronage from so learned and judicious a Prince as Your Highness is, whose allowance and acceptance of our labours shall more honour and encourage us, than all the calumniations and hard interpretations of other men shall dismay us. So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish Persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil; we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord; and sustained without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favour, which will ever give countenance to honest and Christian endeavours against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations.

The Lord of heaven and earth bless Your Majesty with many and happy days, that, as his heavenly hand hath enriched Your Highness with many singular and extraordinary graces, so You may be the wonder of the world in this latter age for happiness and true felicity, to the honour of that great GOD, and the good of his Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour.



**OLD
TESTAMENT**



Genesis

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD'S MISSION AND OURS?

God made women and men in God's image to be like God and to reign over creation.

WHO WROTE IT? Moses, according to Jewish and Christian traditions.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? The events of Genesis stretch from the beginning of time through the 1800s BC.

HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

1–5: God creates the world; humans sin

6–11: Flood destroys the world; Noah's family rebuilds

12–25: God provides for Abraham and Sarah and for Hagar and Ishmael

25–35: Isaac and Rebekah's lives; Jacob meets Leah and Rachel and builds their family

36: Esau's many descendants

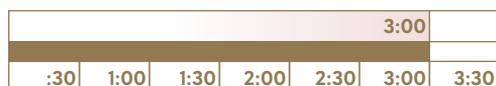
37–50: Jacob's family suffers betrayal and famine and moves to Egypt

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS

- + *Being God's Image* (5)
- + *Days of Creation* (6)
- + *Why Would God Punish Eve Like That?* (8)
- + *Eve: Ruined to Redeemed* (9)
- + *Needing Favor: Finding God's Gift* (13)
- + *Image* (43)

Words to Remember are highlighted throughout this book

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO READ?



BC Timeline

- **CREATION**
— Adam and Eve made by God
— Eve bears Cain and Abel, then Seth
- NOT DATED** ● **FLOOD**
— Noah's wife, sons, and daughters-in-law survive
- 2166 ● **ABRAM BORN**
- 2156 ● **SARAI BORN**
- c. 2100 ● **HAGAR BORN**
- 2091 ● **ABRAM AND SARAI ENTER CANAAN**
- 2066 ● **SARAH GIVES BIRTH TO ISAAC**
- c. 2063 ● **HAGAR AND ISHMAEL RESCUED BY "THOU GOD SEEST ME"**
- c. 2050 ● **REBEKAH BORN**
- 2006 ● **REBEKAH GIVES BIRTH TO JACOB AND ESAU**
- c. 1940 ● **LEAH BORN, RACHEL BORN**
- 1929 ● **JACOB FLEES TO HARAN**
- c. 1918 ● **LEAH GIVES BIRTH TO JUDAH**
- 1915 ● **RACHEL GIVES BIRTH TO JOSEPH**
- 1898 ● **JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY**
- c. 1890 ● **TAMAR BECOMES PREGNANT BY JUDAH**
- 1885 ● **JOSEPH RULES EGYPT**
- 1805 ● **JOSEPH DIES**

The Account of Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

⁴And God saw the light, that *it was good*: and God divided the light from the darkness.

⁵And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

⁷And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.

⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

¹⁰And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was good*.

¹¹And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

¹²And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*.

¹³And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

1:6 *firmament*: space.

¹⁵And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

¹⁶And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.

¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

¹⁸And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*.

¹⁹And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that may fly* above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

²¹And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*.

²²And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

²³And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

²⁵And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*.

²⁶And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

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

1:1 Some Christians read Genesis as a description of how God made the world. Other Christians see it as a poetic celebration of creation that unveils God's intentions without revealing his methods. Whatever you conclude about the way God made the world, Genesis leaves no room to see our world as an accident. Other biblical accounts of creation agree (for example, Job 38; Psalm 104).

1:11-12 The focus of the creation week is fertility. God told the residents of creation to "be fruitful, and multiply" and to "replenish the earth" (1:22, 28). He repeatedly emphasized the fruitfulness of plants (1:11-12, 29-30) and made each living thing "after their kind" (1:21, 25; see 1:11-12). Like animals, people are residents of the world God made, but unlike animals, people were made in God's likeness, according to his image.

1:22 In the context of his creative work, God blessed a few

specific things: fish and birds (1:21-22), animals and humans (1:25-28), and the seventh day (2:3)—later called the Sabbath. This trilogy of blessings highlights the Creator's plan: God made humankind in his image to exercise stewardship over the creatures of the earth and to participate in God's Sabbath rest.

1:26-27 Humans are not divine, but we share kinship with our creator as the only creature made in his image. "Image of God" is our human identity, expressed through the loving rule of creation on God's behalf (see Psalm 8:5-8). Men and women share this role. Together we participate in the human task of creating culture, maintaining order, and ensuring the flourishing of the natural world. Male and female sexuality is central to what it means to be human because the perpetuation of the human race depends on it.

Theos

IMAGE

MY STORY
WITH GODBeing God's Image—
Finding Our Human Identity and Vocation

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 1:1-31

When I was twenty, I had my first chance to teach in a college classroom under the supervision of my professor. I was hooked. I knew instantly that this is what I was born to do.

You and I are different people. We each possess unique talents and interests and participate in a unique sphere of relationships. The fact that humans have been created as God's image-bearers means that every life is precious—yours, mine, our neighbors, even our enemies (see 9:6). And because we reflect God's image, each of us is needed for the world to be what God intended.

Genesis 1 is a beautifully structured account of God's creative work. At the beginning of the chapter, the earth was "without form . . . and void" (1:2). Step by step, God created the framework in which life could flourish. On days one to three, God formed three domains, preparing each for inhabitants—light and darkness, water and sky, and dry land. On days four to six, God populated those domains with residents—heavenly lights, fish and birds, and animals and humans. By the end of creation week, the earth was no longer "formless and empty," but organized and filled with life.

The Bible imagines creation as a cosmic temple in which all creatures worship God. Unlike other ancient temples, the Israelite temple lacked a statue or idol of God as a symbol of divine presence in the central sanctuary. God prohibited such images because, as we see in the creation account, humans fill the role of representing him. This mission to represent him, which arises from this crucial chapter, requires every one of us—in a wide variety of ways, in every corner of the globe. Both men and women are essential workers in this task.

Genesis 1:28-30 hints at one particular task envisioned by God. We represent the Creator by being responsible stewards of the world he made. Edible plants are to be food for both humans and animals. This human stewardship does not imply unlimited resources for people or free and unlimited enterprise. Part of our job is to ensure equitable access to the world's resources for both humans and animals. If we pollute the natural world and endanger animal or human habitats, then we are not fulfilling our God-given roles. If each of us leans into our roles as God's image-bearers, his glory will be evident over the whole earth.

Our mission is
to represent
God on earth.

IMAGINE

How does it feel to know you are God's appointed representative?

In what ways might God be calling you to care for some part of the earth?

"My mom and I have very different gifts. While I teach in a college classroom, my mom works in her sewing room, using her skills to make feminine hygiene products to ensure that teenage girls in Africa can stay in school."

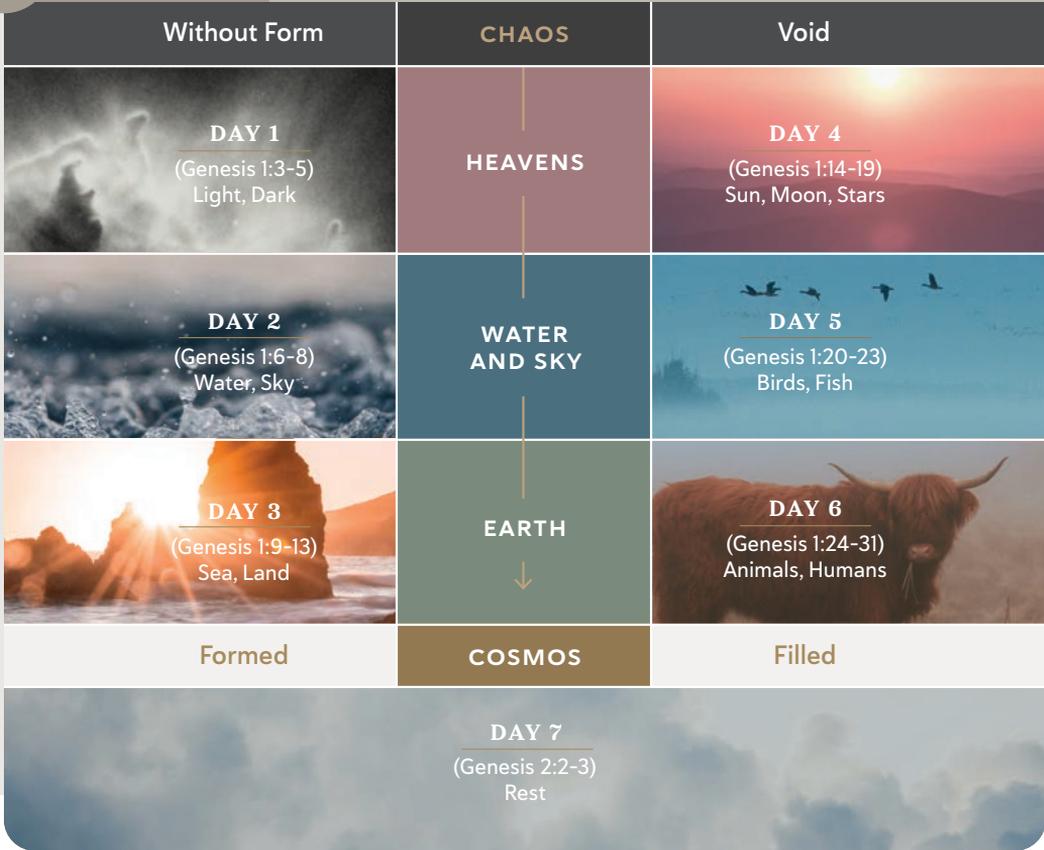
CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, and YouTuber and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California.





Insight

DAYS OF CREATION



²⁸And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

²⁹And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

³¹And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

1:29 meat: food.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The Man and Woman in Eden

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

⁵And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

2:2 God did not rest because he was tired. He rested because his creative work was finished. He rested the way a king rests on his throne when his dominion is at peace. The creation week is a

model for us to emulate. None of us can work nonstop. We need regular periods of rest. Genesis 1:1–2:3 invites us to pattern our work week after God's.

⁶But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

⁷And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

⁸And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

⁹And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

¹¹The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

¹²And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

¹³And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

¹⁴And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

¹⁵And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

¹⁸And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the*

man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

¹⁹And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

²⁰And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

²³And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The Man and Woman Sin

3 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

²And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

³But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

2:18 *help meet*: suitable helper. 2:24 *cleave*: be joined. 3:1 *subtil*: cunning.

2:7 God personally formed the first human (*adam* in Hebrew) from the dust of the ground (*adamah* in Hebrew) and brought him to life with divine breath. This description emphasizes God's personal attention, and it reinforces the representative role of humans as God's image. In ancient Mesopotamia, artisans would craft an idol (or "image") and wash the statue's mouth in a garden ritual, preparing it to be inhabited by the divine presence. Similarly, God placed the first human in a garden and breathed life into him so that he could carry out his role as God's representative (2:15), a fitting role for someone made in God's image (1:27).

2:18-20 For the first time, something in creation was "not good," namely, the lack of a partner for the human. The man could not carry out all his work alone. He needed a "help meet for him." The Hebrew word *ezer*, translated "help meet" here, is not a term of subservience, as though the man needed a servant. In fact, the term *ezer* most often describes God as Israel's helper (see Genesis 49:25; Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; Psalm 146:5). The human needed a true partner who would be just like him.

2:21-22 While the first human came from the ground, the second human came from the first. This origin emphasizes their essential unity. They are "after their kind" (1:21, 25; see 1:11-12). The word

"rib" may be misleading. The Hebrew term (*tsela*) denotes the "side" of something or a "supporting beam" (see Exodus 25:12). The verbal form of the word (*tsala*) means "to limp" (or "to halt," Genesis 32:31). One might even imagine that God divided the first human in half, making each half into a whole.

2:23-25 Woman (*ishah* in Hebrew) was from man (*ish*) just like human (*adam*) was from the ground (*adamah*). The wordplays in Hebrew underscore the connectedness of humans to the earth and to each other. Unity in marriage is possible because man and woman share the essential characteristics of humanity, including the status as God's image-bearer and representative (1:27). Their relationship began in mutual trust and honor.

3:1-7 Did the serpent ask the woman because she would be more easily deceived? She was not present when God instructed Adam. This may explain Paul's instruction in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 that women be allowed to learn so that they will not be easily deceived. But even though the woman is the first to appear in this scene, the man was clearly present and culpable as well. Neither resisted the temptation to define good and evil for themselves. Every temptation begins with casting doubt on the goodness of God. Cultivating trust in him is the surest defense against temptation.



Perspective

Why would God punish Eve like that?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 3:1-19

Why would God impose such consequences for Eve's one wayward choice? After all, when she decided to take and eat, she did not yet know good and evil. Though adult in form, Eve was young in creation and unwise to the serpent's shrewdness.

When a toddler plays with fire, will the parent discipline for spite? Or to protect? Banning Adam and Eve was God's rescue. In their fallen state, eating of the tree of life would tragically seal them in sin's aftermath.

Eve bore some of God's own torment. Her pain in bringing forth life would compel her toward the Creator, and she would begin to understand how a loving parent chooses pain to give life. Eve's love for Adam would also bear pain, requiring a lifetime of learning what it means to partner in the mystery of marriage.

Our pain compels our outreach for God, and therein lies the gift.

Eve's consequences led to another sacred tree, the Cross, from which we now partake. This time, the body and blood of Christ and the pain he bore delivers us into life everlasting, restoring our perfect communion with God. As Paul says,

Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. (Romans 5:18)

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *Perhaps unaware of what her choice would mean, how was Eve's perspective limited? How did Eve's understanding grow?*

MINE: *"We do not get to choose results, only our actions. We can practice choosing wisely and entrusting results to God."*

YOURS: *Even in pain, how might we trust God as a loving parent?*

MISTY ARTERBURN is an author and speaker, contributing to Bible projects, devotionals, and recovery materials for over twenty years. Wife and mom to five, Misty is the founder of Recovery Girls and the general editor of *The One Year Bible for Women*.

⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

⁶And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

⁷And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

⁸And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

¹⁴And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

¹⁶Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

¹⁷And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast

3:13 *beguiled*: deceived. **3:15** *enmity*: hatred.

3:11-13 Rather than confessing, the man blamed the woman for giving him the fruit and God for giving him the woman. The woman followed suit, accusing the serpent. The serpent played a role and would be punished (3:14), but that did not release the woman or the man from their guilt.

3:16-19 The consequences of human rebellion complicated human vocation. Pain in childbirth would make it more difficult to fill the earth. The partnership God intended between man and woman would become antagonistic, so that rather than ruling the earth, they would seek to dominate each other. Fruitful cultivation of the land would prove difficult. Although humans do far more than have babies and plant crops, these activities bear the brunt of the consequences of sin because they are essential to the fulfillment of the creation blessing (1:26-28).

Eve

IDENTITY

Ruined to Redeemed

Eve remembers . . .

The fruit looked so good. It was so beautiful I could almost taste it before I bit into it. The serpent promised that good things would come from it: I would be wise and know everything. That first bite was so sweet . . .

And then everything changed, dramatically.

If I had only known. I didn't really understand the consequences. Adam was right there, and he didn't stop me either. In fact, he later blamed me. Wasn't he to blame too? Oh, God, now what?

The consequences: sorrow in childbirth, desire to control my husband. What does that even mean?

A promise: A descendant of mine will one day bruise the head of the serpent? When? How?

Life became painful. We were driven out of the Garden, never to reenter. God gave us clothes, but we had to learn how to survive. We lost two sons—Cain killed Abel, then Cain was banished from our presence. Oh, the pain of loss!

Yet in the pain, God provided. He gave us Seth, a son to carry on life. We learned to trust that God is still in charge.

EVE'S STORY IS TOLD IN GENESIS 2:19–4:26.

God is bigger than our missteps and our pain. He is always ready to restore and provide.

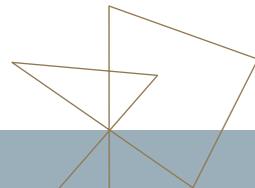
IDENTIFY

What life-changing events have you experienced?

Where do you find God in them?

"I miscarried my second child, propelling me into early menopause. Then, God opened doors to counsel grieving women and to a new career in academia, which I may not have pursued if I had a small child at home."

ELIZABETH GLANVILLE, PhD, is retired faculty from Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Mission and Theology. She is an international teacher on missions and leadership and chaplain for a local police department and her retirement community.



hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

¹⁸Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

²⁰And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

²¹Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

²²And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

²³Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

Cain and Abel

4 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.*

²And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering;

⁵But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

3:24 *Cherubims*: mighty angels. *keep*: guard. 4:1 *knew*: had sexual relations with. 4:5 *wroth*: angry.

3:20-24 God graciously clothed Adam and Eve since they had become ashamed of their nakedness. In his mercy, God prevented them from eating of the tree of life, so that they would not live forever in their state of alienation from God and each other.

4:1 Eve recognized God's blessing in the gift of children. The birth of a son ensured the continuation of the family line. However, the tragic consequences of sin threatened her family's survival. Cain did not offer God his best, and his jealousy toward Abel drove him to kill his own brother.

4:17 Where did Cain find a wife? If Adam and Eve were the only people, then he would have to have married his sister. However, Genesis does not specifically claim that Adam and Eve were the only humans created. It's possible that their story is

⁶And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

⁸And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

⁹And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am I* my brother's keeper?

¹⁰And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

¹¹And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

¹²When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

¹³And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

¹⁴Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that every one that findeth me shall slay me.*

¹⁵And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

¹⁶And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

¹⁸And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

¹⁹And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

an archetype of the human experience. The existence of other humans seems to be implied in Cain's fear that others would kill him if he wandered alone (4:14-15). In 1 Corinthians 15:22, the apostle Paul speaks of Adam's representative role for humanity. Some believe Adam's role requires him to be the genetic parent of all humans, while others do not.

4:19 Lamech was the first polygamist mentioned in the Bible. Marrying two women is contrary to God's pattern for marriage (2:24) and might have been a manifestation of the rebellion of Cain's descendants. Lamech later boasted to his wives about his vengeful spirit, revealing his violent nature. Genesis certainly does not present him as a role model. For other negative examples related to polygamy, see 28:6-9; 29:14-30:24.

²⁰And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of *such as have* cattle.

²¹And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.*

²²And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

²³And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

4:21 organ: flute. 4:22 artificer: craftsman. brass: bronze.

²⁴If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

The Birth of Seth

²⁵And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

²⁶And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Dikos

IMAGE

MY STORY WITH
FAMILY & FRIENDS

Seeing Our Families Shine

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 4:1-12

Have you ever had a rock hit your windshield while driving? The sound may startle you, and at first you might not see any damage. Then a few days later, you notice a tiny chip. Then the chip becomes a crack, and soon there's a line across the windshield you can no longer ignore.

Isn't that how brokenness works in our families? Cain's sin starts so small—unjustified anger—and only he knows about it. In the end, his selfishness and jealousy break the entire family.

Abel loses life.

Cain loses community.

Eve and Adam lose two sons.

Has your family experienced loss because sin caused a fracture? Divorce was ours. As we meet families in the Bible and consider our own families, we see that every family member has flaws. And our failures hurt us and others.

But that's not the end of the story.

Family is God's idea. He longs to see whole, healthy, joy-filled homes that display his love. Just as an intact windshield helps us see and protects those in the car, asking God to show us what's broken can make us a blessing to our families—and make our families a blessing to others.

Through divorce, I lost much. But God restored. He redeemed. He also stretched my previously limited view of family. When we come to the end of denial and invite God's intervention, he responds. For every crack, his love restores.

God's love brings blessings, sparkling through our family's shattered places.

IMAGINE

Consider your best and highest dream for your family. How has God positioned you to help lead them there?

What conversations or actions of love need to happen?

"I pray God helps me see my own faults and be courageous enough to address them before they splinter and grow."

SUZY SHEPHERD is the founder of SHINE, creator of Stonecroft's Where Love Lives outreach experience, and mom to a blended tribe of nine. She finds great joy in creating experiences for people to know God's love.



Perspective

Does God okay the “forcible taking” of women?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 6:1-8

What “sons of God” would forcibly take any women they wanted to be their wives? This doesn’t sound very godly at all.

Many scholars resolve this by concluding that the “sons of God” phrasing refers to spiritual or angelic beings who had rebelled against God. Others suggest that it refers to human rulers who married commoners. Still others argue that it refers to descendants of Seth who married the female descendants of Cain.

Regardless, we recognize that the sexual arena has been a favorite playground for the enemy from the time man and woman first knew their nakedness (3:7). At the birth of their shame, they covered their sexual bodies with fig leaves.

This passage from Genesis 6 conceals whether the human women were consenting to these unions or were taken against their will. But one thing is clear: This sexual deviancy wreaked havoc.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *What does the phrase “took . . . all which they chose” suggest about how these “sons of God” esteemed women and interacted with them?*

MINE: *“I am not a fan of the word victim—at least with respect to many of my own experiences. While I acknowledge its appropriate use when I have been deceived, used, or harmed, I don’t want to downplay any part of choice I may have had in a matter: how I show up, how I respond, what resources I turn to, whether an incident defines or grows me, whether I reach for God or reject him. I am not responsible for others’ choices, and sometimes I may not have a choice, but when I do, I can ask, What choices will I make today?”*

YOURS: *How might you guard against sexual trouble and champion sexual responsibility today?*

MISTY ARTERBURN is an author and speaker, contributing to Bible projects, devotionals, and recovery materials for over twenty years. Wife and mom to five, Misty is the founder of Recovery Girls and the general editor of *The One Year Bible for Women*.

The Descendants of Adam

5 This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

²Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

³And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

⁴And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

⁵And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

⁶And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:

⁷And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:

⁸And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

⁹And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:

¹⁰And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:

¹¹And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

¹²And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel:

¹³And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:

¹⁴And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

¹⁵And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:

¹⁶And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:

¹⁷And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

¹⁸And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch:

¹⁹And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

²⁰And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

²¹And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:

²²And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

5:1-3 This second biblical mention of the image (or “likeness”) of God helps to define it. God made humans to be like him. Similarly, Adam fathered a son who was just like him—in his very image. Our identity as God’s image implies kinship. We are related to God in a way analogous to a human family. This passage also affirms that the human status as God’s image was not lost when Adam and Eve sinned.

²³And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

²⁴And Enoch walked with God: and he *was not*; for God took him.

²⁵And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:

²⁶And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:

²⁷And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

²⁸And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:

²⁹And he called his name Noah, saying, *This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.*

6:2 *fair*: beautiful.

³⁰And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:

³¹And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

³²And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

A World Gone Wrong

6 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

²That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were fair*; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

³And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always

6:1-4 Obviously the birth of daughters was nothing new, but in this passage, the daughters take center stage. Their stunning beauty attracted some unlikely suitors. Scholars have suggested three possibilities for the identity of the “sons of God” in this passage: angelic beings who left their stations to cohabit with

women, royalty who intermarried with commoners, or members of Seth’s family who married women from Cain’s family. Language reminiscent of 3:6 (“saw . . . took”) shows the rebellious nature of this act. The result of these unions was a warrior race known for its wickedness.



Come Close

NEEDING FAVOR: FINDING GOD’S GIFT

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 6:5-9

Favor. It’s something we pray for often. Favor in our jobs. Favor in our relationships. Favor in our personal endeavors. We read about the lives of women and men in the Bible such as Abel, Abraham, Noah, Hannah, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, who all experienced the favor of God in one way or another. Whether it was for a season or a lifetime, the blessing of God’s favor truly changed the lives of these individuals. God’s favor still has the power to do so for us today.

There are quite a few mentions of God’s favor (or “grace,” depending on the translation) in the Bible. In a famous proverb, quoted multiple times in the New Testament, favor is attached to the character trait of humility (Proverbs 3:34; see James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Could it be that our humility moves God to grant us favor? When we think of others who lost God’s favor, such as Cain or King Saul, could a lack of humility have contributed?

Favor is a gift; we can’t work ourselves into it. We accept and receive it by faith through our relationship with God. As we learn to love the Giver more than the gift, we will begin to see strands of his favor weaving throughout our lives.

REFLECT “For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with a shield*.” PSALM 5:12

Lord, thank you for the gift of your gracious favor. May I walk humbly before you all the days of my life. Amen.

CONSIDER “Humility is the gateway into the grace and the favor of God.” HAROLD WARNER

God’s favor is a gift;
greater still is knowing
the gift-Giver.

QUANTRILLA ARD, PhD, is a faith-based personal and spiritual development author, speaker, Bible teacher, and literary agent who believes in the power of collective strength, community, and fellowship.

strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

⁴There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

⁵And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

⁶And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

⁷And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I

have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

⁸But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

The Story of Noah

⁹These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.

¹⁰And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

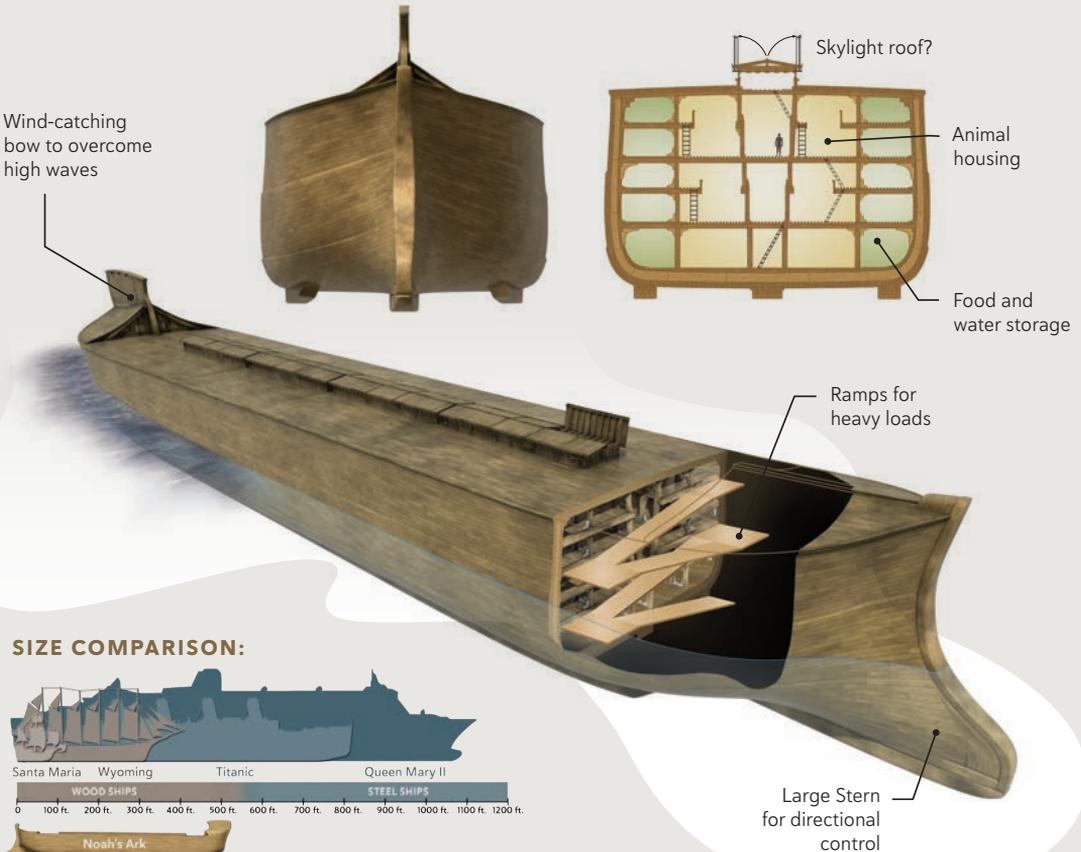
¹¹The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

6:11–7:24 Human wickedness had reached the point that God decided to start over with Noah, the only godly person alive. The Flood would return the world to its pre-created state—formless

and empty, with water covering everything. Therefore, Noah and his family needed to preserve a pair of every animal to repopulate the earth after the Flood (see 8:17).

Insight NOAH'S ARK

These illustrations depict what the ark might have looked like based on the descriptions we read in 6:14-16. Noah and his wife, and their sons and daughters-in-law, and all the creatures they brought on board survived the Flood in a boat like this.



¹²And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

¹³And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

¹⁵And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it of. The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

¹⁶A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it.

¹⁷And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and every thing that is* in the earth shall die.

¹⁸But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

²⁰Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every *sort* shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.

²¹And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

²²Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

The Flood Covers the Earth

7 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

²Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female.

³Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

⁴For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

⁵And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶And Noah *was* six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

⁷And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

⁸Of clean beasts, and of beasts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

⁹There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

¹⁰And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

¹²And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;*

¹⁴They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

¹⁵And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life.

¹⁶And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

¹⁸And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

¹⁹And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered.

²⁰Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

²¹And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

²²All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.

²³And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.

²⁴And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

7:13 *selfsame*: very same.

The Flood Recedes

8 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;*

²The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

³And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

⁴And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

⁵And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

⁶And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:

⁷And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

⁸Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

⁹But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

¹⁰And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;

¹¹And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.*

¹²And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

¹³And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

¹⁴And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

¹⁵And God spake unto Noah, saying,

8:1 *asswaged*: subsided. **8:11** *abated*: lowered. **9:3** *meat*: food.

8:1 This verse is the center of a massive chiasm (or literary sandwich). What precedes this verse is a description of the building and boarding of the ark and the rising of the waters for 150 days. What follows is a description of the receding of the waters for 150 days and the disembarking of the animals. God's *remembering* Noah does not suggest that he forgot about him but marks the moment in which God took action to keep his promise.

9:1-3 The blessing first given to Adam (1:28) was reissued to Noah, the "Adam" of the newly cleansed world in need of repopulation and cultural expansion. God introduced two modifications to the created order: Now animals would live in

¹⁶Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

¹⁷Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

¹⁸And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:

¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

²⁰And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

²¹And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

²²While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

God Confirms His Covenant

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

²And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

³Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.*

⁴But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

⁵And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

⁶Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

⁷And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

terror of humans, and humans were allowed to eat meat along with seed-bearing plants (see 1:29)—a change in diet related to the animals' terror.

9:5-6 Violence, including murder, was a major factor in bringing about God's judgment in the form of the Flood (4:8; 6:11, 13). At this new beginning for humans, God affirmed the sanctity of human life and established a system of retributive justice for the taking of human life. Being created in God's image gives humans a unique status and authority within creation. Since murder destroys a person made in God's image, a murderer incurred the ultimate penalty.

⁸And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

⁹And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

¹⁰And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

¹¹And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

¹²And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations:

¹³I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

¹⁵And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

¹⁶And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

¹⁷And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

Noah's Sons

¹⁸And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan.

¹⁹These *are* the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

²⁰And Noah began to *be* an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.*

²¹And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.*

²³And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

9:20 *husbandman*: farmer. 9:22 *without*: outside.

9:20-25 The significance of Ham's shameful behavior is not fully clear. He may have engaged sexually with his father or with his mother (this type of act is elsewhere referred to literally in the original language as "uncovering the nakedness of one's father," Leviticus 20:11). It is possible that he merely gazed upon his naked father and, rather than covering him and keeping the matter secret, dishonored him by mocking him to his brothers. The curse likely fell on Ham's son Canaan to emphasize the shameful father-son dynamic of Ham's sin.



Perspective

Where are the women?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 10:1-32

Genesis 10 ranks among the most boring parts of the Bible. So many hard-to-pronounce names!

Are you bothered by how few women appear in these lists?

The ancient Israelites usually recorded only male heirs in their genealogies. A genealogy traced the transfer of wealth from one generation to another and identified tribal membership through fathers and sons. Without a complex chart, marriage alliances between clans were much more difficult to trace. Women were remembered through stories and songs, rather than through genealogies. And they took pride in the social standing of their fathers, husbands, and sons.

God revealed himself in ways that made sense to ancient cultures, and he engages with us in ways that make sense today. Our task is to read the Bible well in its ancient context, discern how it reveals God's character, and then ask how we can live out its principles in our contexts today.

VIEWPOINTS

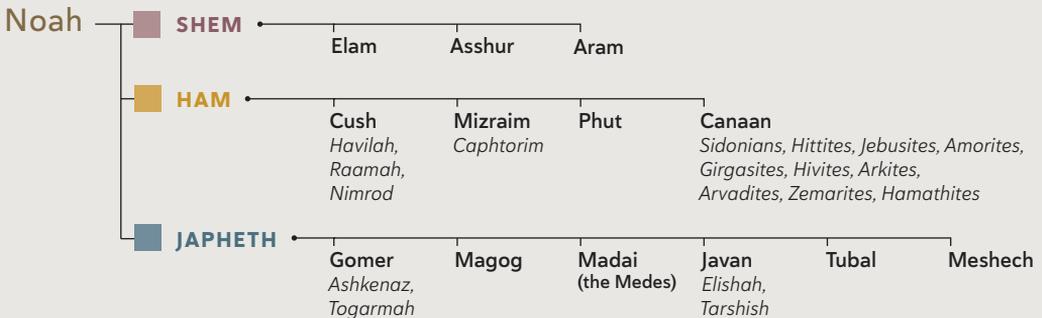
HERS: *How would an ancient Israelite woman have felt hearing her husband's name read aloud in a list such as this?*

MINE: *"I love finding women's names in Bible genealogies. It is rare, so when one does appear, it means she is notable in some way. I love to be a detective and find out why!"*

YOURS: *Can you imagine life as an ancient Israelite woman? Would you have been glad to stay in the shadows? Or would you have longed to play a bigger role in public life?*

CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, and YouTuber and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California.





²⁴And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

²⁵And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

²⁶And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

²⁷God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

²⁸And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

²⁹And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

10 Now these *are* the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

Descendants of Japheth

²The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

³And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

⁵By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Descendants of Ham

⁶And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

⁷And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

⁸And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

¹⁰And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

¹¹Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

¹²And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city.

¹³And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

¹⁴And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

¹⁵And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

¹⁶And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Gargasite,

¹⁷And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

¹⁸And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

¹⁹And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

²⁰These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

Descendants of Shem

²¹Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were *children* born.

²²The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

²³And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

²⁴And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.

²⁵And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan.

²⁶And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

²⁷And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

²⁸And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

²⁹And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these *were* the sons of Joktan.

³⁰And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east.

³¹These *are* the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

Conclusion

³²These *are* the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

²And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

10:1-32 The birth of many children after the Flood began to fulfill God's purposes for the renewed creation (9:1; see 1:26-28). This chapter, often called the Table of Nations, lists seventy nations descending from Noah's sons. The total of seventy names indicates completeness and symbolizes the totality of the world, which would later be blessed by the descendants of Abraham (12:3; 18:18). Women are not named because male heirs were the basis for genealogical records.

11:1-9 After the Flood, human civilization spread far and wide

in fulfillment of God's purposes (9:1). Babel represented a vain attempt to avoid scattering. The tower was likely a ziggurat, a massive stepped tower built to support a staircase near a temple garden, likely intended to facilitate the descent of the gods to earth. Without divine instruction to build, the project represented a human attempt to dictate the terms of acceptable worship. The people's desire for fame and security apart from God prompted the Lord's response to confuse their building efforts.

³And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

⁴And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

⁶And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

⁷Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.*

⁹Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:

¹¹And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

¹²And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:

¹³And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

¹⁴And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

¹⁵And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

¹⁶And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:

¹⁷And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

¹⁸And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:

¹⁹And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

²⁰And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:

²¹And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

11:8 *left off*: ceased.

11:30 Sarai, Rebekah, and Rachel all experienced infertility (25:21; 29:31). Sarai's infertility introduced a paradox between her experience and God's promise of many descendants (12:2). Frequently in the Old Testament, God demonstrated his sovereignty by miraculously giving children to women who had previously been unable to have children (Judges 13:3; 1 Samuel 1:2; 2:5; see also Psalm 113:9; Isaiah 54:1).

²²And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:

²³And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

²⁴And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:

²⁵And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

²⁶And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Family of Terah

²⁷Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

²⁸And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

²⁹And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

³⁰But Sarai *was* barren; she *had* no child.

³¹And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

³²And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

⁴So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

12:1-3 Before Abram could experience God's blessing, he had to step out in obedience by setting out on a journey of unknown length and destination. The exclusivity of God's covenant with Abram may seem troubling at first, but God blessed his family so that they could bless all the other families on earth. Abram's blessing was God's solution for the brokenness and violence of the post-Flood world (see Psalm 67).

⁶And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

⁷And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

⁸And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

⁹And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

Shalom

IMAGE

MY STORY OF MY
UNIQUE INFLUENCE

God's Call and Mine

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 12:2-3

"What is my purpose?" I pleaded, scrambling down New Mexico's tallest mountain. A lightning storm above me, with no trees to protect me, I hurtled down the boulder field. For months, I'd asked God for my calling. Now, intensified by visions of a life cut short, I yelled it. Maybe you cry out for purpose too. As with Abram, God's calling comes:

- before we bless—Abram didn't earn God's blessing;
- to bless others—God empowered Abram to do good;
- to bless near and far—Abram gave life to family, nation, and ultimately, God's redemption plan.

Abram's calling fit within God's mission to reconcile his creation to himself, a mission God actively pursues throughout the Bible. God's purpose begins with God himself, not us; is empowered by him, not us; and comes through those he chooses, not by our choice alone.

As with Abram, God made his call clear for me, too. As I scuttled down, avoiding the lightning strikes, I sensed it. It came as though a whisper from God, "I am your purpose."

"Ow," I yelled, as I caught a tree and hugged it, glad even for its rough bark that stopped my descent. Like the tree, this answer protected me from exposure to any lesser calling. My calling begins with, is empowered by, and is guided by God; no other source will do.

Knowing my calling comes from God, not me, gives me confidence to press on.

IMAGINE

How might seeing God as your chief purpose guide you?

"In seminary, I learned to see the entire Bible reflecting God's mission to restore. Knowing my calling comes from God, not me, gives me confidence to live on purpose for a lifetime."

NAOMI CRAMER OVERTON, MBA, DIS, lives to realize beauty-filled visions that lift us to flourishing, with our families and beyond. Naomi has been CEO for Stonecroft and MOPS, director with Compassion International and World Vision, and General Editor for this Bible.





Abram, Sarai, their extended family, and their servants walked from Ur to Haran (600 miles), on to Canaan (400 miles), then down to Egypt (325 miles), and back to Canaan again. How many steps do you walk a day? Women worldwide walk 5,000 steps daily. If Sarai had done that, it would have taken her 660 days to complete this route.

5,000
steps
per day



Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

¹¹And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon:

¹²Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

¹³Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

¹⁴And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

¹⁵The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

¹⁶And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.*

12:16 *entreated*: treated.

12:10-20 Abram deceived Pharaoh regarding his wife's identity rather than trusting God's protection, putting both her and Pharaoh's household at risk (see 20:1-18; 26:1-11). Sarai was in fact his half sister (20:12), but Abram's deception resulted in their expulsion from Egypt.

¹⁷And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

¹⁸And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What *is* this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife?

¹⁹Why saidst thou, She *is* my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way.

²⁰And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

²And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

³And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

⁴Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

13:1-18 God had asked Abram to leave his father's family (12:1), but he took his nephew Lot with him. Lot's company became problematic when the two households grew so large that the land could not support them both. Abram gave Lot first choice of land because he believed in God's promise. After they parted ways, God reaffirmed his plan to bless Abram (13:14-17).

⁵And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

⁶And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*

⁷And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

⁸And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren.

⁹Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

¹⁰And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

¹¹Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

¹²Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom.

¹³But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

¹⁴And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

¹⁵For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

¹⁶And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered.

¹⁷Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

¹⁸Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

²*That these* made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

³All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea.

⁴Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that *were* with him, and smote the

13:6 *substance*: possessions.



Perspective

God's ideal or our real?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 14:11-16

Is ancient Hebrew culture an ideal to emulate? Or is it incidental to the message?

In some cases, God gives instructions about how to live based on universal truths. For example, every human being is made in the image of God, so every human life is precious and worth protecting (9:6). But other times the Bible describes practices that do not easily transfer to our context today.

Abraham and Sarah lived as semi-nomadic tent dwellers who kept herds of animals. And in that day, the men would often fight battles and take women as plunder. But God is not asking us to move into tents, keep sheep, and carry swords. Does that mean these stories have nothing to teach us?

Ancient Hebrew culture does not provide a template for us to replicate. We are not called to re-create culture-specific elements in our own lives, and many times the characters are not models for emulation. But we can still learn a great deal about God through these stories, including the ways he shows himself to be faithful, even to flawed people—just like us.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *Sarah might shudder to think women would read her stories and think of her as a role model. She had her fair share of failures and likely felt she was often just muddling through.*

MINE: *"Seeing how God communicated to ancient cultures inspires me. God works in and through flawed people in less-than-ideal societies. That means he can work through me, too, even though I have a long way to go!"*

YOURS: *Can you think of aspects of our culture that are less than ideal? And can you see ways that God works in and through us anyway?*

CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, and YouTuber and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California.

Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,*

⁶And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which *is* by the wilderness.

⁷And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which *is* Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

⁸And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same *is* Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;*

⁹With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.

¹⁰And the vale of Siddim *was full of* slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.*

¹¹And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.*

¹²And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

¹³And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these *were* confederate with Abram.*

¹⁴And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.

¹⁵And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus.*

¹⁶And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Melchizedek Blesses Abram

¹⁷And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale.*

14:5 *smote*: attacked. 14:8 *vale*: valley. 14:10 *slimepits*: asphalt pits. 14:11 *victuals*: food. 14:13 *confederate*: allies.

14:15 *himself*: his forces. *smote*: attacked. 14:17 *dale*: valley. 14:23 *shoelatchet*: shoelace. 15:2 *steward*: heir. 15:4 *bowels*: body.

14:11-16 Lot's unfortunate choice to live near Sodom resulted in trouble for himself and for Abram. Lot had chosen land that looked fruitful, but the violent and corrupt residents would ruin him (19:1-38).

14:18-20 The story of Melchizedek portrays the initial fulfillment of 12:1-3, where God declared that nations who blessed Abram would be blessed. Abram shared with Melchizedek the spoils of his victory. Melchizedek was a non-Israelite priest who feared God, pointing to the future expansion of the Kingdom of God among non-Israelites. The author of Hebrews saw justification for Christ's priesthood here. Like Melchizedek, Jesus was not from Israel's priestly line (see Hebrews 7).

¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.

¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

²⁰And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

²¹And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

²²And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

²³That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.*

²⁴Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

The LORD's Covenant Promise to Abram

15 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

²And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?*

³And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house *is* mine heir.

⁴And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*

⁵And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

⁶And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

⁷And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

15:1-6 Abram and Sarai's infertility was a source of consternation because it cast doubt on God's promise of many descendants. Abram freely expressed his doubts to God, and God reaffirmed the promise.

15:7-21 With a solemn ceremony, God made a binding covenant with Abram that guaranteed the fulfillment of his promises. Normally, in such a ceremony both parties would walk between the cut animals to symbolize the severity of the oath, staking their lives on their mutual commitment. However, Abram merely observed as a lamp and furnace passed through the pieces, indicating God's unilateral commitment. The burning lamp and smoking furnace may have anticipated the pillars of fire and cloud that would lead Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 13:21-22).

Hagar

IDENTITY

Honored by Names

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” Shakespeare penned these words spoken by Juliet, pondering the significance of names. For Hagar, being called by name and being allowed to name bring her honor.

Sarai was unable to get pregnant, despite God’s promise, so she took matters into her own hands and arranged for Hagar, an enslaved Egyptian woman, to sleep with Abram. Hagar conceived, and her relationship with Sarai turned awful. Hagar was treated so harshly by Sarai that she decided to run away.

God went looking for Hagar and called her by name (16:8). Throughout the story, Abram and Sarai had never called Hagar by her name. But God knew her and her situation intimately. And they had a one-on-one conversation. Hagar, a Gentile who was considered property, enjoyed a powerful and tender exchange with the God of the universe.

When they had finished, Hagar gave God a name (16:13). She is the only one in Scripture to have this honor. In Hebrew, she called him El-roi, which translates to “Thou God seest me.”

Hagar was seen and known by God and was allowed to know God right back. Through Hagar’s story, God showed he values and honors women, even when others might not.

When I feel invisible,
I find hope in El-roi,
the God who sees me
and knows my name.

HAGAR’S STORY IS TOLD IN GENESIS 16; 21; SHE IS ALSO MENTIONED IN GALATIANS 4:21-31.

IDENTIFY

Have you ever felt overlooked or invisible?

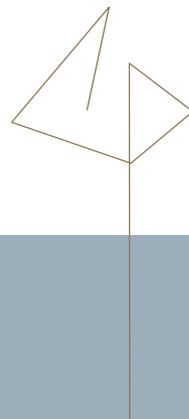
What was that like?

Have you experienced God looking and calling for you?

What happened and how did you respond?

“When I feel invisible or overlooked, I find hope in El-roi, the God who sees me and knows my name and circumstances. He is near to you and me as we look to him.”

VIVIAN MABUNI is a national speaker, author of *Open Hands, Willing Heart*, and podcast host of *Someday Is Here* for AAPI Christians, with over thirty years of ministry experience.





Perspective

Are concubines God's plan?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 16:1-10

Today, when we read about concubines, feelings of confusion or even disgust might tempt us to skip over these Scriptures. But each story of a marginalized woman in the Bible is another reminder that things are not the way they are supposed to be. No woman should be owned by someone else.

In ancient culture, concubines helped land-owners build their households by increasing their offspring. The Old Testament doesn't explicitly condemn polygamy, but it repeatedly demonstrates its perils.

While some societies and individuals value women only as property, God elevates women to image-bearing status, marked by his love and reflecting his glory. Amid a worldly system that oppresses, God is at work to redeem, and his people can be a part of that redemption work.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *How do we see God care for Hagar, who was marginalized in this way?*

MINE: *"How can I trust that God sees me in circumstances where I am not valued?"*

YOURS: *When you feel unseen or devalued, how can you trust God to redeem those parts of your life?*

KAT ARMSTRONG, MA, is a Bible teacher, preacher, coach, and ministry leader. She cofounded the Polished Network and authored *No More Holding Back*, *The In-Between Place*, and the Storyline Bible Studies series.

⁸And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

⁹And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

¹⁰And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

¹¹And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

¹³And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;*

¹⁴And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*

¹⁵And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.*

¹⁷And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

¹⁸In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

¹⁹The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

²⁰And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

²¹And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Hagar.

²And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.*

³And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

15:13 of a surety: surely. **15:14** substance: possessions. **15:16** hither: here. **16:2** hearkened: listened.

16:1-3 Infertility is always painful, but in the case of Abram and Sarai, the lack of a child presented a theological crisis as God had promised Abram a son (15:1-6). Sarai resorted to the

customary Mesopotamian strategy for dealing with childlessness by offering her servant to her husband as a surrogate. The child would be Abram's official heir.

⁴And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

⁵And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

⁶But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

⁷And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

⁸And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

⁹And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

¹⁰And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

¹¹And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

¹²And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

¹³And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?*

¹⁴Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

¹⁶And Abram *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

Abram Is Named Abraham

17 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, *I am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

16:13 *looked after*: seen. **17:11** *betwixt*: between.

²And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

³And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

⁴As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

⁵Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

⁶And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

⁸And I will give thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

The Mark of the Covenant

⁹And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

¹⁰This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

¹¹And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*

¹²And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.

¹³He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

¹⁴And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

16:4-6 After Hagar conceived, tension arose with Sarai. Hagar's air of superiority provoked mistreatment from Sarai. Ironically, Sarai's mistreatment of her Egyptian servant anticipated the Egyptians' mistreatment of Sarai's descendants (Exodus 1:11-12).

16:7-12 Hagar's distress did not go unnoticed. Even though her son would not be heir of God's covenant promises to Abram, God gave Ishmael promises of his own. God's instruction for Hagar to return to Sarai was not a universal call for submission to abuse. Later, God would allow Hagar to leave (21:8-21).

16:13 Hagar was the first person in the Bible to give God a name: "Thou God seest me." Although she lacked power, wealth, and status in her household, she was not invisible to

God. And although her son was not the heir of God's covenant promise, she was not outside God's care. God's promise to bless all nations through Abram's family would include the nations that descended from Ishmael.

17:10-14 Male circumcision was the sign of membership in the covenant community. However, women were equally part of the covenant. They were the daughters, wives, and mothers of circumcised men and participated under their membership. The prohibition of intermarriage with uncircumcised peoples was not motivated by prejudice but was a means of protecting covenant continuity in Abraham's family. Foreigners who lived among the Israelites were also circumcised to show that they shared in the covenant.

Sarai Is Named Sarah

¹⁵And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name be.

¹⁶And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

¹⁷Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a *child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

¹⁸And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

¹⁹And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

²¹But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

²²And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.*

²³And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.*

²⁴And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁵And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁶In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

²⁷And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

A Son Is Promised to Sarah

18 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

17:22 *left off*: ceased. **17:23** *selfsame*: very same. **18:3** *pass not away*: do not pass by. **18:12** *waxed*: grown. *lord*: husband. **18:13** *of a surety*: surely.

17:15-16 God renamed Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah) to underscore his determination to bless their descendants, despite their unbelief and their highly dysfunctional family (see 16:1-16). Sarai and Sarah both mean “princess”; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan. The new name, fitting for one who would be the mother of kings, was a milestone in Sarah’s calling and would serve as a constant reminder to her of God’s promise.

18:5-8 Hospitality was a cardinal virtue in ancient culture. In an age before restaurants and grocery stores, travelers depended heavily upon the hospitality of people along their route. As

²And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

³And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:*

⁴Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

⁵And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

⁶And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

⁷And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

⁸And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

⁹And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

¹⁰And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which *was* behind him.

¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old and well stricken in age; *and* it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

¹²Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?*

¹³And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?*

¹⁴Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

¹⁵Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

¹⁶And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

the manager of a large household, Abraham coordinated the preparation of bread, meat, yogurt, and milk, and personally served his distinguished guests.

18:9-15 God had already promised that Sarah would bear a son (see 17:15-19). In that account, the narrator referred to God using his divine title, the Hebrew word *Elohim* (“God” in English translations). Here, Abraham experienced a physical visitation from a speaker who identified God by his covenant name, Yahweh (“LORD” in our English translations). Sarah’s response to the promise mattered. Her incredulity prompted a poignant question: “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” (18:14).

¹⁷And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

¹⁸Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

¹⁹For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

²⁰And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

²¹I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

²²And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

²³And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

²⁴Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?*

²⁵That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

²⁶And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

²⁷And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am* but dust and ashes:

²⁸Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack* of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

²⁹And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

³⁰And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

³¹And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

³²And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

³³And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.*

18:19 *justice and judgment*: righteousness and justice.

18:24 *peradventure*: suppose. **18:33** *left communing*: finished speaking.



Perspective

How could Lot do that?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 19:1-8

Some of us can instantly relate to how Lot's daughters surely felt about Lot's offer to the men of Sodom: disposable. We also have been compromised by people we trusted to love and protect us.

But God reaches for us in our peril. Lot, in his cowardice, is deemed by God as worthy to save. His daughters, reduced to sexual commodities, are deemed worthy to save. This makes us curious about God's love.

Jesus knows the feeling of being forsaken. And he showed that opposing realities can simultaneously be true: We can suffer intense rejection, deprivation, abandonment, devaluing, and crushing shame, while at the same time, we can celebrate a heavenly Father who loves us so unselfishly that he gave himself rather than giving us.

Lot offered to sacrifice his own daughters, perhaps to save himself. God sacrifices himself to save us.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *Based on their experiences with their earthly father, what might Lot's daughters have believed about themselves and God?*

MINE: *"As a young girl under my dad's protection, I knew I was safe. Loved. Treasured. Absent his protection, my world took a different spin. A godly father carries for us daughters a representation of God and a message of our worth."*

YOURS: *What ideas have you formed about yourself or of God based on experiences with your earthly father? In what ways might you challenge your negative beliefs as you reflect on your heavenly Father?*

MISTY ARTERBURN is an author and speaker, contributing to Bible projects, devotionals, and recovery materials for over twenty years. Wife and mom to five, Misty is the founder of Recovery Girls and the general editor of *The One Year Bible for Women*.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

19 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

²And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.*

³And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

⁴But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.*

⁵And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.*

⁶And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

⁷And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

⁸Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

⁹And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.*

¹⁰But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

¹¹And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.*

¹²And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place:

¹³For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.*

¹⁴And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get

you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

¹⁵And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

¹⁶And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

¹⁷And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

¹⁸And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

¹⁹Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

²⁰Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

²¹And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

²²Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

²³The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

²⁴Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

²⁵And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

²⁶But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

²⁸And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

19:2 *tarry*: stay. 19:4 *compassed*: surrounded. 19:5 *know*: have sex with. 19:9 *sojourn*: live among us. *sore*: hard. 19:11 *smote*: struck. 19:13 *waxen*: grown.

19:6-8 This story of Lot is deeply troubling. He offered his daughters to be raped, prioritizing the protection of his out-of-town guests. And his future sons-in-law were among those rioting outside (19:14)! Lot's willingness for his daughters to marry men who apparently were among the violent sex offenders, his disregard for his daughters' safety, and his hesitation to leave such a corrupt city (19:16) all demonstrate how depraved he had

become. He may have been morally superior to his neighbors (2 Peter 2:7-8), but not by much. God's decision to destroy the city was thoroughly justified.

19:26 Lot's wife did not simply glance over her shoulder. The verb translated "looked" here indicates prolonged, intense gazing—toward the world she loved (compare 15:5). Lot's wife was too attached to Sodom to accept God's mercy, so she was included in the judgment as she lingered in the valley.

Sarah

IDENTITY

Lies and Laughter

I can imagine Sarah being furious.

As she drew a king's attention for being beautiful, Abraham lied, "She is my sister."
"I'm your what?"

Sarah was marched off into the king's harem, even brought to the king himself.

Who we are is sometimes chosen for us. Amid the swirl of family, culture, and appearances, we can become someone we are most definitely not. And one day, as we sip our coffee, we realize that what we're doing is slowly sucking the life out of us. We wonder, "How did I get here?" Maybe someone else's fear—but most likely our own—has wrapped us in a bad-dream-of-a-life.

While Abraham got it wrong in this passage, Sarah herself got identity wrong a lot. Would she believe God was the one who could make her a mom, even though she was too old? Or would she laugh? Would she maintain faith that she would be the mother of many generations, or would she offer her servant to have a baby in her place? Would she be a "princess" (the meaning of the name Sarah) who cared for her subjects, or would she use her authority to harm her servant Hagar?

God intervened for Sarah. He spoke to the king in a dream, and the king scrambled to return her to Abraham, who fessed up. Sarah was restored to who she really was.

God knows our true identity, not just what others say about us or the ways we pigeonhole ourselves. As with Sarah, our identity, linked to his love, gives life.

God loves the real you, not who others say you are. Your identity, tried to his love, gives life.

SARAH'S STORY IS TOLD IN GENESIS 11-23; SHE IS ALSO MENTIONED IN ISAIAH 51:2; ROMANS 4:19; 9:9; GALATIANS 4:21-31; HEBREWS 11:11; 1 PETER 3:6.

IDENTIFY

What words have you spoken, have others spoken, or has God spoken about who you are?

"Like Sarah, I once found myself living by others' lies. Turns out God made me for something that fits a lot better."

CARA DAY is a writer and illustrator. She has served with Stonecroft Ministries helping women live "extraordinary."



²⁹And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

³¹And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we

will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

³³And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

³⁴And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

³⁵And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

19:30-35 Lot’s daughters’ plan to have sex with their drunk father showed that they, too, had been corrupted by Sodom’s culture. They saw incest as the only way to carry on their family

line. Ironically, their father had offered them to be raped (19:6-8), but they raped him instead. Their illicit unions produced the ancestors of the Moabites and Ammonites, perennial enemies of Israel (but see Deuteronomy 2:9, 19).



Come Close

FEARFUL: GOD IS STRONGER STILL

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 20:1-18

My dad has a letter from his sister, dated 1974. My favorite part is that it’s in fancy, almost whimsical cursive. But she was a no-nonsense gal. She graduated college at a time when many women didn’t go to college. And she was going to make sure my dad got an education too.

In many parts of the world today, women are not offered a full education. Even in Western culture, we are still gaining ground in elevating women’s voices. In the ancient world, Sarah’s voice would have been mostly unheard, while Abraham’s voice would have rung influential and powerful.

My strongest place is trusting in the one true God.

Sarah might have felt fearful and helpless as she was introduced to the pagan king Abimelech with the lie that she was Abraham’s sister. But even as Abraham’s fear held Sarah captive, God could free her still. God kept Abimelech from touching Sarah. And Sarah’s faith could grow stronger as she witnessed God’s deliverance.

There are a lot of strong women out there, and the ability to trust in God in the face of mistreatment is an important demonstration of strength.

REFLECT “For I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.” GENESIS 20:6

God, help me trust you when I feel helpless and voiceless. Make me strong, knowing you are a strong, trustworthy God. Amen.

CONSIDER “Man and woman are designed to rule together. Exclusion of women is the opposite of God’s design. To exclude women is to exclude half of God’s creation means of ruling the earth. This means that we must include and celebrate the influence and presence of women in all realms of life. Women should be sought after and encouraged, educated and equipped, taught, learned with and learned from, celebrated and needed as essential partners in the shared task.” ELYSE FITZ-PATRICK AND ERIC SCHUMACHER, *Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women*

WHITNEY PUTNAM is the senior director of women’s events and marketing at New Life Ministries. She is an overall joy-chaser and is often found dancing in her kitchen.

³⁶Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

³⁷And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

³⁸And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Abraham Deceives Abimelech

20 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.*

²And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

³But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she *is* a man's wife.

⁴But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

⁵Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

⁶And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.*

⁷Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

⁸Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.*

⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

¹⁰And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

20:1 sojourned: lived. 20:6 suffered: allowed. 20:8 sore: very.

20:2 Abraham maintained his practice of introducing Sarah as his sister (see 12:13; 20:13), jeopardizing God's promise that Sarah would bear Abraham a son. His reasoning—"the fear of God is not in this place" (20:11)—was faulty. Abimelech responded immediately when God confronted him; his household was terrified of having offended a deity (20:3-10). Abimelech was angry that Abraham's deception had made him guilty of "a great sin" (20:9). Evidently, he knew taking another man's wife was wrong. **20:17-18** The barrenness of Abimelech's household suggests that some time had passed. The fact that infertility has been divine punishment for sin does not mean that it usually is. However, the story clearly conveys that God alone controls fertility.

¹¹And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

¹²And yet indeed *she is* my sister; she *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

¹³And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.

¹⁴And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

¹⁵And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

¹⁶And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.

¹⁷So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare *children*.

¹⁸For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

The Birth of Isaac

21 And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

²For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

³And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

⁵And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

⁶And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so *that* all that hear will laugh with me.

⁷And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born *him* a son in his old age.

21:1-2 Twenty-five years after God first promised Abraham a son (12:1-4), and one year after the angels visited Abraham and Sarah (18:1-15), Sarah gave birth. The intervening years had been filled with difficulty, and the wait was hard, but God kept his promise.

21:6 The name Isaac (*yitskhaq* in Hebrew) means "he laughs." Sarah's wordplay showed that the laughter of unbelief when the promise was given (18:12) had changed to the laughter of joy at its fulfillment. Sarah knew that everyone who had heard would laugh with her, rejoicing at the news. Hebrews 11:11 commends her faith in God's promise despite her struggle with unbelief.



Perspective

Where are the role models?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 22:1-19

If we open the Bible in search of role models, we soon run into trouble. Most Bible stories teach us about God's righteous character, but the humans in the stories are full of flaws. Their exploits are usually not a good example.

The Bible describes, rather than prescribes, their behavior. However, we take courage from the fact that God shows mercy to people who are flawed, just like us.

Passages like Genesis 22 are even more difficult. How can I trust a God who tells a father to kill his own son? What does this tell me about God's character?

Keep in mind that Abraham's situation is unique. And, as we see by the story's end, God never intended to put Isaac to death. He certainly does not ask us to sacrifice our children. In fact, there are numerous passages in the Bible that show God abhorring such practices. His instruction to Abraham was purely a test of trust. Would Abraham cling to the boy or entrust him to God?

VIEWPOINTS

HIS: *How did this experience change Abraham's view of God?*

MINE: *"Like Abraham, I am always in danger of clinging to what God has provided instead of clinging to God. Will I trust him when it looks like I may lose something dear to me?"*

YOURS: *Is there something that easily becomes more important to you than God? Does this passage help reorient your trust?*

CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, and YouTuber and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California.

Hagar and Ishmael Are Sent Away

⁸And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.

⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

¹⁰Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.*

¹¹And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

¹²And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

¹³And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed.

¹⁴And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

¹⁵And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.*

¹⁶And she went, and sat her down over against *him* a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lift up her voice, and wept.*

¹⁷And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.

¹⁸Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

¹⁹And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

²⁰And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

²¹And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Abraham's Covenant with Abimelech

²²And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doest:

21:10 *bondwoman*: slave. **21:15** *bottle*: skin. *cast*: put. **21:16** *over against*: across.

21:9-10 Earlier, Sarah had mistreated Hagar to the point that Hagar had fled (16:6). When Hagar's son mistreated Isaac, Sarah demanded that "this bondwoman and her son" leave. Sarah's initial lack of trust in God in giving Hagar to Abraham resulted in many years of exploitation and multigenerational rivalry.

21:14-21 Abraham gave Hagar meager resources when he sent her away, but God kept his promise to this Egyptian woman and her son. He heard their cries and provided for their needs, reiterating his plan to "make him a great nation" (see 16:10). Hagar later succeeded in finding Ishmael an Egyptian wife.

²³Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: *but* according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.*

²⁴And Abraham said, I will swear.

²⁵And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

²⁶And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it*, but today.*

²⁷And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

²⁸And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

²⁹And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What *mean* these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

³⁰And he said, For *these* seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

³¹Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them.

³²Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

³³And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

³⁴And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

Abraham's Faith Tested

22 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, *here I am*.*

²And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

³And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.*

⁴Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

21:23 *sojourned*: lived. 21:26 *wot*: know. 22:1 *tempt*: test. 22:3 *clave*: split.

22:2 God's instructions to Abraham are troubling (see Perspective on page 34), but this story does not encourage child abuse. God's unique test of Abraham's faith related directly to the covenant promise about Isaac's descendants. Abraham's



“It is not how many years we live, but rather what we do with them.”

EVANGELINE CORY BOOTH
(1865–1950) British theologian
and Salvation Army general

⁵And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

⁷And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here *am I*, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

⁸And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

⁹And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

¹⁰And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here *am I*.

¹²And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

immediate and unquestioning obedience showed he trusted God to provide a substitute (22:3, 5, 8) or even raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19).