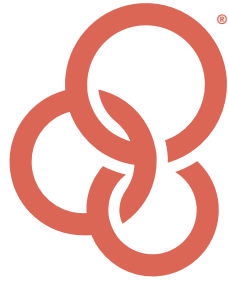




Three Story[®] Bible

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KNOW GOD BETTER.





Three Story Bible



New Living
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Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
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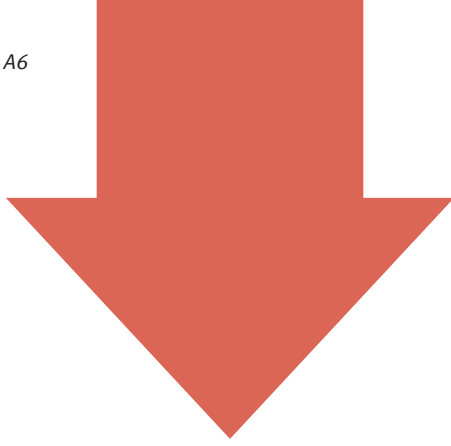
WELCOME

The Bible is pretty amazing when you think about it:

God speaking to us, telling us about himself, the world he created, and our place in it. The Creator loves his creation, all of it; and he wants his creation to know and love him, too.



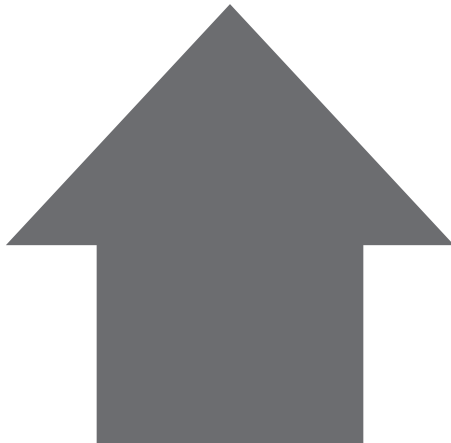
But the Bible is sometimes hard to understand. What do stories about people who lived thousands of years ago, on the other side of the world, have to do with your life? How do laws about sacrifices for ancient Israel have anything to do with how you relate to God today? These are very good questions! The best way to get a handle on what the Bible means and how it applies to you is to read through it with some trusted guides that will help you ask good questions and walk through answering them together. The *Three Story Bible* is designed to be a guide for you as you, your friends, and your spiritual mentors walk through the Bible together.



HOW THE *THREE* *STORY BIBLE* WORKS

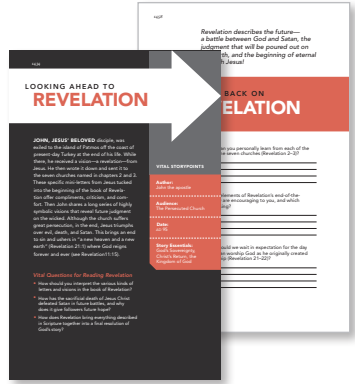
The *Three Story Bible* is designed to help you learn more about God, yourself, and the people around you as you read and engage with God's Word. The best way to get a better handle on what God is saying to you through his Word is to connect with other people who are on the same journey—there is no reason to try to simply figure it out on your own.

We created three main features in the *Three Story Bible* that are all about helping you on that journey.



BOOK INTRODUCTIONS AND CLOSINGS

There are 66 books in the Bible, and no two are exactly alike. Introductions will help you get the lay of the land for each book so that you will be set up to understand what you are reading. "Vital Storypoints" provide you with the essential details, like author, audience, date, and big themes from the book. And a few "Vital Questions" will start you thinking about a few important things that this book will address. At the end of each book of the Bible, you'll find a few more questions to help you review key things that you encountered while reading that book and reflect on what they mean for your life.



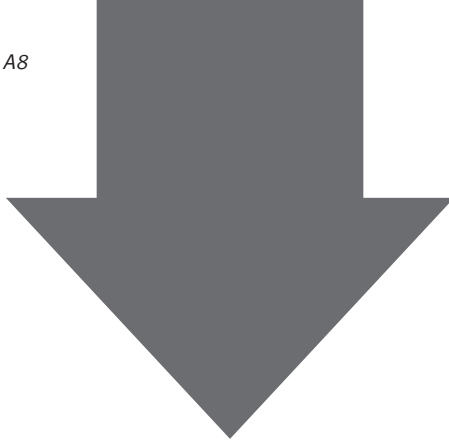
CONNECTION POINT QUESTIONS

While reading through the Bible, it is sometimes difficult to know what kind of questions to even be asking yourself in order to understand what the Bible is saying or what it means for you today. In the *Three Story Bible*, you'll find 495 questions scattered throughout the Bible that will get you thinking and talking about the right questions. These can be a great way to talk with your friends about what God is teaching you in the Bible. And if you want a little bit of help thinking through the question, we've got you covered! Beginning on page 1465, we've got some brief starter answers to help direct your thinking about every single one of those questions.

GOD'S STORY THEN & NOW

God's story is not just about what happened in the past; it is also about what is happening right now in your life and in the lives of other people just like you. There are 150 "Then & Now" features in the *Three Story Bible* that connect a real life story of a person from today with the stories that we read in the Bible. These will help you connect your story with God's story and inspire you to be the kind of person who can also help your friends who don't know God to see how their stories can get caught up in God's story as well.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CONNECTED TO GOD'S STORY?

The Bible makes us aware of God's story. There are some parts of God's story that are past tense. In the Scriptures we learn that the world came into existence because God told it to:

Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. . . . Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. (GENESIS 1:3-5, 31)

We are reminded that creation itself is still actively testifying about its Creator:

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. (PSALM 19:1-2)

We read about the corruption of God's good creation because of sin. One verse summarizes hundreds of pages in the Bible that forcefully reveal the story of how sin entered the world and the damage it caused:

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

(ROMANS 5:12)


Sin's devastation is not limited to its impact on humans. All of creation is groaning in frustration because things aren't now what God originally intended:

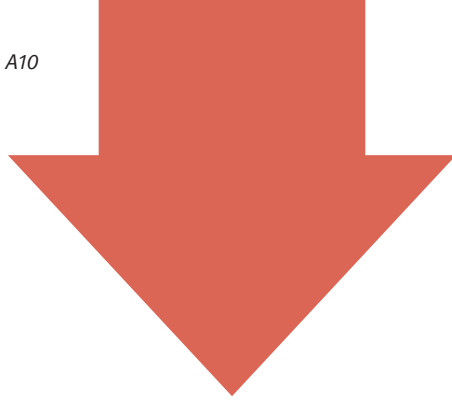
Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (ROMANS 8:18-24)

Most significantly, we read about how much God loves us—the masterpiece of his creation. Moved by this immeasurable love, God himself descended into his world, in the flesh. Jesus Christ is God. He took on the limitations of being a human, taught us how to live in the joy we were created for, and died on the cross to provide the only way of escape from sin's life-wrecking impact on us.

Do you know enough about God's story to recognize how critical Jesus is to your own story? Here's one short summary about Jesus you can find in the Bible that makes all the difference to us.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. (JOHN 1:10-13)





BELIEVE

Jesus is the centerpiece of God's story. And God's story is not all past tense! The Bible says you should shift who you BELIEVE in—who you trust—entirely away from your own rebellious (sinful) self. *In the present tense* you should put your trust completely in Jesus.

Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for your sins. BELIEVE it happened in the past, and act on what you BELIEVE by asking God to forgive you in the present, thanking him for his love and mercy.

Jesus' resurrection proves he has the power to give you the brand-new life he taught about. BELIEVE it, and act on what you BELIEVE by learning what Jesus wants for your life, living in obedience to him, and making him known in your world. You will find yourself in great company—and the others around you who already know Jesus will be a great help in learning what life with Jesus looks like.

As you BELIEVE, Jesus will work miraculously within you to help you BECOME more and more like him. Your story, like those you read about in these pages, will change forever. God will even use your story to change your friends.

You may be drawn to dream about how you can change your friend's story as it's represented by the last set of circles. (By the way, there are plenty of stories like this scattered throughout this Bible to encourage you just that way.) But if your own story looks like the first set of circles rather than the others, what's the likelihood that you can help change someone else? A constant question to reflect on when you read the Bible is:

How can more and more of my life story be intertwined with more and more of God's?

Put another way, how can we remain immersed in Jesus and his story?

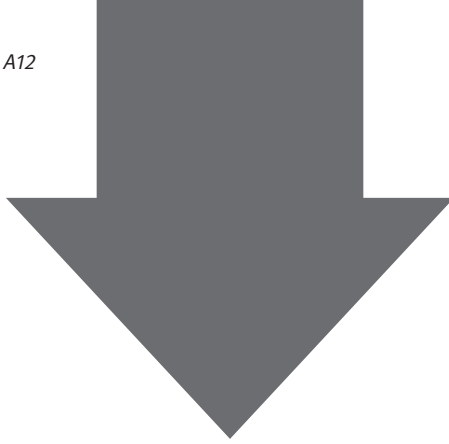
As you get to know
God and your friend . . .



. . . your relationship grows
deeper and your friend
starts to see God in you . . .

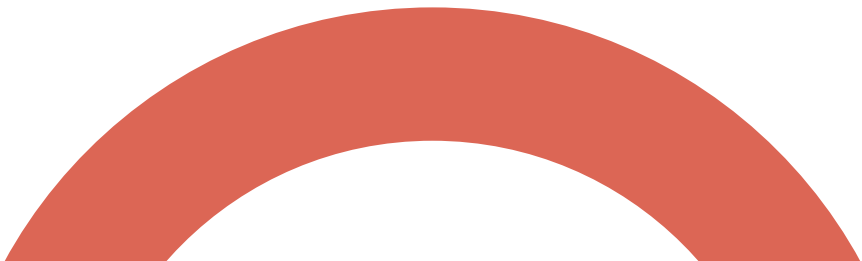


. . . which gives you the
chance to help your
friend know God, too.



REMAIN

Have you ever been on a tandem bike? At first it might seem as if it would be easier to ride a bike with the help of another person pumping the pedals behind you, but it doesn't take long to realize it's not that easy to steer a tandem. Maneuvering around obstacles is tricky while both bikers try to pedal in sync. But if you ride with someone who has tandem bike experience, knows how to navigate scary curves and bumpy terrain, and even knows some shortcuts in the route, you would be wise to let that person take the handlebars. "Pedal, hang on, and enjoy the ride," are his instructions. In fact, your biggest role is just to *remain* on the bike. If you *remain*, he can handle the rest.



Jesus calls us to *remain*. He offers all we need to live life to the fullest, and to do that he tells us, “*Remain* in me.” It isn’t that he is self-centered or controlling, but he knows the way for us to live life as God intended. He even promises to meet our every need when we choose to *remain* with him. Just like the biker, he knows how to get us through the scary and bumpy places in life and show us an adventure like we’ve never known before. Hold on, don’t let go, don’t leave, stay put. “*Remain*” is Jesus’ big instruction to us. After all, doesn’t it make sense that, as the creator of life, Jesus Christ knows how best to live it?

“REMAIN” IN JOHN 15:1-17

Jesus uses the word *remain* ten times in this speech, which is one of the last things he said to his disciples before he went to the cross, so it must be a big deal. He wants his followers to *remain* with him all the time. Only Jesus can give us the spiritual nourishment we need to live to the fullest. Since Jesus constantly *remains* with his Father God, when we *remain* in Jesus we connect to the Father, too. God’s ongoing story includes the story-line contributions we make as we *remain* in Christ.

As Jesus is saying these things, he is spending some of his final moments with his closest friends. They share a meal together and then walk through a vineyard. While walking, Jesus observes that a branch can only produce grapes when it *remains* connected to the main vine. He drives home the point that we will only be able to produce life kind of fruit that looks like Jesus when we *remain* connected to Jesus. We can’t generate that kind of fruit on our own. God does the work in us when we *remain* in him—just like it works with grapes, branches, and vines.

The experience of *remaining* in Christ is critically important. So important that Jesus said, “*Apart from me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Jesus wants us to produce good fruit and make a difference in this world, but we can’t do it without *remaining* in him.

One way we show our love for Jesus is to do what he says is best for us. He knows this way of living won’t be easy. That’s why he tells us to *remain* in him every day . . . over and over and over. In Christ, the impossible becomes possible! When we *remain* in and with Christ, we are never alone. Always connected, we’re never without hope. It’s how we followers of Jesus are meant to live.

In order for a lamp to shine, the light bulb must *remain* in the fixture.

Remain within coverage areas to use cell phones.

A fish that wants to breathe must *remain* underwater.

A baby *remains* in the care of her parents to receive life-giving nourishment.



And now you're ready to dive into this *Three Story Bible* for yourself. It's a great way for you to learn how to live a *Three Story* lifestyle . . . full of joy, gratitude, and hope as you follow Jesus Christ!



The Old Testament



LOOKING AHEAD TO GENESIS

GENESIS MEANS “BEGINNINGS”—the beginnings of the earth, animals, people, and more are all found in this first book of the Bible. We also read about sin’s entrance into our world, which explains why life is such a struggle. But as quickly as sin and despair move in to ruin creation, we see how much God loves what he made. He won’t let us self-destruct without doing what’s necessary to re-center his creation around the hope and life that he alone can supply. In Genesis God launched his ultimate rescue plan, in which he will make all things new again. Amazingly, God’s strategy revolved around the faithful responses of a common tent-dweller named Abraham and of his descendants, who each, in turn, embraced God’s call and inherited his promise that they would live in covenant relationship with him. In Genesis we learn about what God set in motion long ago so that we too can live in this relationship with him.

Vital Questions for Reading Genesis

- What kind of relationship does God intend to have with his human creation?
- Every family has its problems, even in the Bible. What are some family conflicts found in Genesis? What does this tell us about whom God uses to fulfill his plans?
- How did God redeem a man sold into slavery by his brothers? What might this tell us about the difficulties in our lives?

VITAL STORYPOINTS

Author:

Moses

Audience:

Israel, God’s people

Date:

Around 1440 BC

Story Essentials:

Creation, Sin, Covenant, Israel

The Account of Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

1. The Bible tells us that we, as humans, are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). In what way is the very essence of who we are patterned after our Creator? What makes our stories unique from everything else in creation?

⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they come.” And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. ¹⁶God made two great

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened.

²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . . 1:26a Or man; Hebrew reads adam. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads all the earth. 1:27 Or the man; Hebrew reads ha-adam.

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.

²On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God placed a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

2. God’s instructions to the first human revealed three capacities built into the fabric of our design: meaningful work, moral accountability, and relational needs (Genesis 2:15-18). What do these common features suggest we might always know about others’ stories?

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from ‘man.’”

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

The Man and Woman Sin

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

⁴“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would

give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic
and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and
the woman,
and between your offspring and
her offspring.

He will strike* your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your
pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your
husband,
but he will rule over you.*”

¹⁷And to the man he said,

“Since you listened to your wife and ate
from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.
All your life you will struggle to scratch a
living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground

from which you were made.

For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”

Paradise Lost: God’s Judgment

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

3. After the first man and woman on earth acted to disobey God’s commands, their relationship changed forever. What was the evidence of broken trust? What are some of the ways the strain of sin shows up in how your story connects—or doesn’t connect—to others’ stories?

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced* a man!” ²Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

⁶“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

⁸One day Cain suggested to his brother,

3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. **3:15** Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b. **3:16** Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you*. **3:20** *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” **3:22** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **4:1a** Or *the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or *I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.”

In the Beginning

(GENESIS 1–2)

Curtis slipped the book he was reading into his backpack before jumping into his dad's car. He was still trying to figure things out; he wasn't ready to explain why he felt the need to read this book.

When Curtis got home, he went straight to the room he shared with his older brother. He pulled the book out of his backpack and stared at the cover. *The Holy Bible* was in gold letters. It had been given to him by his friend Randy. Curtis had attended a few club meetings on campus with Randy. Everyone there was always talking about Jesus and the Bible. They all thought it was incredible to be known by God and to be able to trust him.

Randy and the others seemed really happy. Still, Curtis was never one to just take someone's word. He liked to research and figure things out for himself. Randy suggested that he read the Bible. Randy had mentioned a book called John, but Curtis couldn't figure out which John he was talking about, so he decided to start at the beginning, Genesis.

Curtis had been reading for days, and now he was at a really good part. Trouble was, he didn't want his brother or anyone else walking in and seeing him reading the Bible. Curtis went to the only room in the house he could have privacy: the bathroom.

He turned on the shower so his family wouldn't bother him, and he sat down on the floor. He just needed a few minutes to find out what happened next. An hour later, with all the hot water gone, Curtis closed the Bible.

Curtis was
 never one
 to just take
 someone's
 word for it.

He still had more to read, but he wondered why no one had ever told him these stories before. Reading about creation in Genesis was fascinating and the Bible just kept getting better. Sure, there was a lot of stuff he didn't understand, but the things God had done to save his people were amazing.

Now Curtis was in the New Testament, and somewhere in the midst of learning God's Story, Curtis found Jesus!

The decision to turn his life over to God was quick. It just made sense. Curtis knew that the God who created everything was the one he wanted to know and follow. Lying in bed in the darkness of his room, Curtis called out and asked God to forgive him and love him.

The decision
to turn his life
over to God just
made sense.

The book of Genesis is the beginning of what we know of God's Story. It is the place where the Creator of the universe first made himself known to us.

God's Story is way too big to be contained, but the Bible gives us all we need to be able to know God. It also gives us a beautiful picture of how deeply we are loved by him.

We were created to be a part of God's Story. That was his plan from the start. In Genesis we read about the complexity of creation, how valuable we are, and the fascinating drama that we get to experience as we find ourselves included in God's Story.

Genesis 1 is so powerful that in 1968 the crew of the Apollo 8 spacecraft used it to convey their feelings as they viewed the earth from space. It was all they could think to say when they were hit with the vastness of creation and the hugeness of the Creator:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And 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" (KJV).

"Let's go out into the fields."* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

¹⁰But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood. ¹²No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

¹⁵The LORD replied, "No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

²⁴ If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be
punished seventy-seven times!"

The Birth of Seth

²⁵Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son.

She named him Seth,* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

The Descendants of Adam

5 This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

³When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. ⁴After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. ⁷After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and

4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields."
4:13 Or *My sin*. **4:16** *Nod* means "wandering." **4:18** Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. **4:25** Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed." **5:1** Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. **5:6** Or the ancestor of; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. **5:7** Or the birth of this ancestor of; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

daughters. ²⁷Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.” ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

A World Gone Wrong

6 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. ²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

⁴In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

The Story of Noah

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. ¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!”

5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” **6:2** Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4.

6:3 Greek version reads *will not remain in*. **6:14a** Traditionally rendered *an ark*. **6:14b** Or *gopher wood*. **6:15** Hebrew *300 cubits [138 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high*. **6:16** Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]*. **7:2** Hebrew *of each clean animal*; similarly in 7:8.

4. God said that the earth was corrupt and full of violence and that only Noah was blameless (Genesis 6:9-11). What sort of relationships do you think Noah had with those around him? What responsibility do we have toward others whose stories don't seem to connect to God?

¹⁴“Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. ¹⁸But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

The Flood Covers the Earth

7 When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood

covered the earth. ⁷He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

¹³That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. ¹⁶A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. ²²Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. ²⁴And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Recedes

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months

later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.* ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

God Confirms His Covenant

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. **8:4** Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. **8:5** Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. **8:13** Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. **8:14** Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13. **8:20** Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird.

and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

¹²Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

5. Rainbows are reminders of a promise that God made to all of creation to never again destroy everything through a flood. Why does God provide us with such memory aids? Is there any part of your story that makes more sense when you remember why God gave us rainbows?

Noah’s Sons

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked

and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

²⁴When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done.

²⁵Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

“May Canaan be cursed!

May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed,

and may Canaan be his servant!

²⁷ May God expand the territory of Japheth! May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,* and may Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. ²⁹He lived 950 years, and then he died.

10 This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

Descendants of Japheth

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.* ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

Descendants of Ham

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” ¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh.

¹¹From there he expanded his territory to

9:6 Or man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. **9:27** Hebrew May he live in the tents of Shem. **10:4** As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read Dodanim. **10:9** Hebrew a great hunter before the Lord; also in 10:9b. **10:10** Hebrew Shinar.

The Rainbow Reminder

(GENESIS 6–9)

In a battle between bullets and prayer, which one wins?

Michael was a strong Christlike person leading an effective student ministry.

One Thursday, just a couple of blocks from campus, a student from Michael's high school was killed and another was wounded in a shooting.

The next day, the whole campus was tense! Everyone expected retaliation. The principal turned to various student leaders to get their help in keeping peace. Michael said, "The Christian club is planning to pray at lunchtime on the Rally Stage in the middle of the Quad."

They started with just a few, but soon 150 students were praying on the Rally Stage. They talked to God openly and loudly.

Peace reigned on the campus.

Monday came. On his way to school, Michael felt the Lord tell him to call another prayer meeting. That same day, over 200 students showed up to pray all through lunch!

No fights that day either.

Several days later a few students walked up to Michael. One said, "On Friday, we'd planned to retaliate, but we saw you guys praying. We just couldn't do it."

"We planned to start a big fight at school on Monday, but you guys were praying again. We just couldn't do it!"

Prayer beat bullets!

God uses all kinds of methods—even floods—to stop evil.

In a battle
between
bullets and
prayer, which
one wins?

Genesis 6–9 tells the story of a time when everyone was evil. Moses writes that everyone was so evil that “the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart” (6:6).

God’s first response to our sin is sadness, and then he creates a way to help and save people. God must and will punish sin, but he always provides a way to forgive and rescue his people.

Jesus is living proof that God always desires to forgive us!

God could find only one family in all the earth that wasn’t totally messed up: Noah’s. He decided to send a flood to end all the evil being done. The evil had to be punished, yet God would provide a way for his creation to go on. He would save Noah’s family only. Noah’s story is an amazing story of rescue.

Prayer
beat
bullets!

God gave Noah’s family a warning and the plans to build a boat. Noah built a boat big enough to carry every species of land animal as well as food and provisions to ensure the survival of his family. According to tradition, Noah begged people to believe him and to join his family on the boat, giving them a chance to be rescued. But no one listened. In fact, tradition says they made fun of Noah.

When the flood came, everyone drowned except Noah and those who were with him.

After the floodwaters went down, God made a covenant (a binding promise) with Noah. God’s covenant was to never again destroy the whole earth through flooding. God made a marker of his new covenant-contract with Noah, and this “marker” was the rainbow. God said, “When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember” (Genesis 9:16). Even today, a rainbow is God’s reminder of his covenant and faithfulness.

In both Michael’s and Noah’s stories, God overcame evil. He doesn’t always work in the way we expect or in our time frame; but he does always take action, and he will ultimately win. We often find ourselves wondering why God lets evil run rampant to begin with, not just in Noah’s story but in the stories of our friends. What we do know is that, in the end, God will conquer all evil. We have to pray, obey, and trust. Every time you see a rainbow, remember God and his love.

Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah,¹² and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites,¹⁴ Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Capthorites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,*¹⁶ Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites,¹⁷ Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,¹⁸ Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out,¹⁹ and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

Descendants of Shem

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,²⁷ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,²⁸ Obal, Abimael, Sheba,²⁹ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan.³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Meshah all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

Conclusion

³²These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words.² As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.)⁴ Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building.⁶ "Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!⁷ Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.⁹ That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

6. There was a time when the earth's people all spoke the same language, and it led them to seek their own fame by building a tower (Genesis 11:1-9). Why did God disrupt their plans? Could he be at work in some of your friends' stories, disrupting their plans?

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad.¹¹ After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah.¹³ After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber.¹⁵ After the birth of Eber,

10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out.* **10:14** Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Capthorites.* Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. **10:15** Hebrew *ancestor of Heth.* **10:21** Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.* **10:24** Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah.* Compare Luke 3:36. **11:2** Hebrew *Shinar.* **11:9** Or *Babylon.* *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." **11:10** Or *the ancestor of;* also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of;* also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads ¹²*When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan.* ¹³*After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died.* Compare Luke 3:35-36.

Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

- ¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.
- ¹⁸When Peleg was 35 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.
- ²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.
- ²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.
- ²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.
- ²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Family of Terah

²⁷This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) ³⁰But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants.*" And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. ¹¹As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we

7. God's master plan for reconciling all nations to himself was launched in the covenant he established with Abram (Genesis 12:1-3). Why did God assume so much of the obligation to fulfill this pledge? How does God's master plan affect your story? your friend's story?

³¹One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I

can have her!" ¹³So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

¹⁴And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai's beauty. ¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon

LEARNING GOD'S STORY

BIBLE READING PLAN

THE BIBLE IS ONLY PART OF GOD'S STORY—after all, God's story isn't finished yet—but as God's Word it is essential to understand what God is saying through the Bible in order to make sense of our own story and how our lives fit into God's story. But where do you start to get a handle on what the Bible is saying? You could start at the beginning and keep going until you reach the end. But if that sounds a bit overwhelming, try this reading plan. It is designed to take you through the Bible in a way that will help you grasp the big picture. You won't read everything, but you'll get enough of the story to start putting it all together.

There are 365 readings in this plan, so if you read one every day you'll get through the whole thing in a year. You might want to go faster or slower. The pace doesn't really matter. Just get started!

T H E O L D T E S T A M E N T

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ○ Genesis 1:1–2:3 | ○ Genesis 32:1–33:16 |
| ○ Genesis 2:15–3:24 | ○ Genesis 37:1–36 |
| ○ Genesis 4:1–16 | ○ Genesis 39:1–23 |
| ○ Genesis 6:9–22 | ○ Genesis 40:1–23 |
| ○ Genesis 7:1–24 | ○ Genesis 41:1–36 |
| ○ Genesis 8:1–22 | ○ Genesis 41:37–57 |
| ○ Genesis 9:1–17 | ○ Genesis 42:1–38 |
| ○ Genesis 11:1–9 | ○ Genesis 43:1–34 |
| ○ Genesis 12:1–9; 17:1–8 | ○ Genesis 44:1–34 |
| ○ Genesis 18:1–15 | ○ Genesis 45:1–28 |
| ○ Genesis 19:15–29 | ○ Genesis 49:1–33 |
| ○ Genesis 21:8–21 | ○ Exodus 1:8–2:10 |
| ○ Genesis 22:1–19 | ○ Exodus 2:11–25 |
| ○ Genesis 24:1–27 | ○ Exodus 3:1–22 |
| ○ Genesis 24:28–67 | ○ Exodus 4:1–17 |
| ○ Genesis 25:19–34 | ○ Exodus 5:1–23 |
| ○ Genesis 27:1–40 | ○ Exodus 6:1–13 |
| ○ Genesis 28:10–22 | ○ Exodus 7:1–14 |
| ○ Genesis 29:14–30 | ○ Exodus 7:15–9:7 |

GUIDED RESPONSES TO CONNECTION POINT QUESTIONS

ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS is one of the most important things you can do to learn more about something or someone. That's why the *Three Story Bible* is filled with questions that are designed to help prompt your thinking about the Bible and how it connects to your life. Here, you'll find a little bit of extra help with thinking about how to answer those questions for yourself. Don't think of these as answers to the questions. Think of them as little pushes in the right direction to give you a place to start your conversations with friends and spiritual mentors.

G E N E S I S

- 1.** *The Bible tells us that we, as humans, are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). In what way is the very essence of who we are patterned after our Creator? What makes our stories unique from everything else in creation?*

page 4

There has been lots of speculation about what precisely the "image of God" means, but it is certainly not about physical resemblance. It is something that is true of every person, regardless of their abilities or spiritual condition. It is something absolutely unique about humanity among God's creation, and it is just as true of an infant as it is of the most accomplished and mature adult in the world. See also Psalm 8 and James 3:9.

- 2.** *God's instructions to the first human revealed three capacities built into the fabric of our design: meaningful work, moral accountability, and relational needs (Genesis 2:15-18). What do these common features suggest we might always know about others' stories?*

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These "capacities" connect directly to some of life's biggest questions: Why am I here? Is there a God? Where do I fit in? Everybody asks these questions even if they say they are not interested in spiritual truths. Maybe your friend, who is not ready to talk about a relationship with God, is ready to discuss one of these "life" questions. As they struggle to find answers apart from God, they may become curious about the answers you have found in your relationship with Jesus. "And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it" (1 Peter 3:15).

- 3.** *After the first man and woman on earth acted to disobey God's commands, their relationship changed forever. What was the evidence of broken trust? What are some of the ways the strain of sin shows up in how your story connects—or doesn't connect—to others' stories?*

page 6

This first act of disobedience led to shame (Genesis 3:7), fear (3:10) and blame (3:12-13). Satan uses our unconfessed sin to make us feel bad about ourselves, to feel separated from God, and to create relational tension with others. We will sin sometimes, but confession brings forgiveness, peace with God, and a renewed desire to please God (Psalm 51:1-11; 1 John 1:6-9).

- 4.** *God said that the earth was corrupt and full of violence and that only Noah was blameless (Genesis 6:9-11). What sort of relationships do you think Noah had with those around him? What responsibility do we have toward others whose stories don't seem to connect to God?*

page 10

Genesis is vague about Noah's biographical details, but we do know that Noah "found favor with the Lord" (Genesis 6:8) and that he "did everything exactly as God had commanded him" (6:22; 7:5; see also 7:9, 16). Maybe that's all we need to know! Our biggest responsibility to others might be to show them a good example of following Jesus (Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:12).

- 5.** *Rainbows are reminders of a promise that God made to all of creation to never again destroy everything through a flood. Why does God provide us with such memory aids? Is there any part of your story that makes more sense when you remember why God gave us rainbows?*

page 12

Many times throughout Scripture God gives his people physical reminders of himself and his promises. Just a few examples can be found in Exodus 12:24-27; Joshua 4:1-24; Esther 9:20-23; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Why do you think God gives us so many reminders of his goodness? Do you take advantage of opportunities to remember who God is and what he has done for you? Next time you participate in the Lord's Supper, make sure you don't miss the opportunity to remember. You might also want to think about creating personal reminders of spiritual milestones in your own life.

- 6.** *There was a time when the earth's people all spoke the same language, and it led them to seek their own fame by building a tower (Genesis 11:1-9). Why did God disrupt their plans? Could he be at work in some of your friends' stories, disrupting their plans?*

page 15

There is much discussion about this story, but one lesson is clear. Any time we pour all our energy into building something "for ourselves" to "make us famous," we are way off track. Although God may not always show up quite as dramatically as in this story, he certainly will not bless any decisions or actions that are all about us and that ignore him in the process. "Seek his will in all you do" (Proverbs 3:5-6; see also Psalm 37:1-7; Matthew 6:33).

LIFE CHOICES INDEX

NEED ANSWERS TO NAGGING QUESTIONS? Check out the selected Scriptures under each topic for a taste of what the Bible has to say about them.

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ACHIEVEMENTS *(See ABILITIES, POTENTIAL, SUCCESS)*

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(See also *CONFLICT/CONFRONTATION, HATRED, REVENGE*)

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(See also *LIFESTYLE, THANKFULNESS*)

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