

# Features Guide

TOOLS TO HELP YOU GO DEEPER IN GOD'S WORD

## 1. OVERVIEW

The Overview helps readers to find out quickly what this book of the Bible is about and why it is important. It gives a thumbnail sketch of the book and its contents and purpose.

## 2. SETTING

*What is the story behind each book of the Bible? What was the need for each book in its setting? Every book of the Bible was written by flesh-and-blood people living in a particular time and place in history. They faced real challenges and difficulties. They wrote to other real flesh-and-blood people living at their own time in history. They wrote to address specific problems in their world, to help their readers understand God's mind regarding the issues and problems that they faced.*

The world of the Bible is very different from our world today, but people are the same everywhere. If we understand the setting in which each book of the Bible was written, we will be in a much better position to understand what problems it addressed, what actions it was prompting, and what message it communicates.

## 3. MAP

The book introductions include maps of the setting to show where the events in each book of the Bible took place and how the places mentioned in that book fit into the world. Each map includes a caption that describes the map and how it relates to the book's setting. Along with a caption, most of these maps include a short index of places mentioned in the book.

## THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Genesis is the book of beginnings—of the universe and of humanity, of sin and its catastrophic effects, and of God's plan to restore blessing to the world through his chosen people. God began his plan when he called Abraham and made a covenant with him. Genesis traces God's promised blessings from generation to generation, to the time of bondage and the need for redemption from Egypt. It lays the foundation for God's subsequent revelation, and most other books of the Bible draw on its contents. Genesis is a source of instruction, comfort, and edification.

### SETTING

When Genesis was written, the children of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years. They had recently been released from bondage and guided through the desert to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, where he had established his covenant relationship with them and had given them his law through Moses. Israel was now poised to enter the Promised Land and receive the inheritance that God had promised Abraham.

While enslaved in Egypt, the Israelites had adopted many pagan ideas and customs from their Egyptian masters (e.g., Exod 32:1-4). They were influenced by false concepts of God, the world, and human nature (e.g., Exod 32), and were reduced to being slaves rather than owners and managers of the land. Perhaps they had forgotten the great promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or perhaps they had concluded that the promises would never be fulfilled.

Before entering the Promised Land, the Israelites needed to understand the nature of God, his world, and their place in it more clearly. They needed to embrace their identity as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis provided the needed understanding.



◀ The Ancient Near East, about 2100 BC. Humanity spread out from the mountains of URARTU (ARARAT) and populated the early centers of civilization. By the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), many of the cities were ancient.

ASSHUR 2:14; 10:22; 25:3; 25:18  
ASSYRIA 10:11  
BABYLON (BABEL), BABYLONIA 10:9-10; 11:1-9; 14:1, 9  
CANAAN 9:18-27; 10:18-19; 12:5-10  
DAMASCUS 14:15; 15:2  
EGYPT 12:10-13:1; 15:18; 37:28-36; 39:1-50:26  
ELAM 10:22; 14:1, 9  
ERECH 10:10; Ezra 4:9  
HAMATH 10:18; 2 Sam 8:9-10; 2 Kgs 14:28; 23:33  
HARAN 11:26-32; 12:4-5; 27:43; 28:10; 29:4; Acts 7:2-4  
SUSA Ezra 4:9; Neh 1:1; Esth 1:2; Dan 8:2  
UR 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh 9:7  
URARTU (ARARAT) 8:4

## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Each book introduction helps readers understand that book as its original readers first understood it in their world. The book introduction discusses the book's setting, gives a summary of its literary structure, discusses historical issues such as authorship and date of writing, and explains the meaning and message of the book for its readers.

#### SUMMARY

Genesis traces God's work to overcome with blessing the curse that came on humankind because of sin. The book arranges family traditions, genealogies, historical events, and editorial comments into a single, sustained argument.

Every section but the first has the heading, "This is the account" (or *These are the generations*; Hebrew *toledoth*); each of the *toledoth* sections explains

#### OUTLINE

- 1:1–2:3  
*Creation*
- 2:4–4:26  
*What Happened to the Creation*
- 5:1–6:8  
*The Account of Adam's Descendants*
- 6:9–9:29  
*The Account of Noah's Family*
- 10:1–11:9  
*The Account of Noah's Sons*
- 11:10–26  
*The Account of Shem's Descendants*
- 11:27–25:11  
*The Account of Terah's Descendants*
- 25:12–18  
*The Account of Ishmael's Descendants*
- 25:19–35:29  
*The Account of Isaac's Descendants*
- 36:1–37:1  
*The Account of Esau's Descendants*
- 37:2–50:26  
*The Account of Jacob's Descendants*

the history of a line of descent. In each case, a deterioration of well-being is followed by an increasing focus on God's plan to bless the world. This plan is the basis for God's covenant with his people; as the blessing develops, the covenant is clarified. By the end of the book, the reader is ready for the fulfillment of the promises in Israel's redemption from bondage (see Exodus).

The first section (1:1–2:3) does not have the *toledoth* heading, and logically so—it is the account of creation "in the beginning" (1:1). The work of creation is wrapped in God's approval and blessing as he fulfills his plan.

The next section (2:4–4:26) focuses on the creation of human life (2:4–25) and traces what became of God's creation because of Adam's and Eve's sin (3:1–13), the curse on their sin (3:14–24), and the extension of sin to their descendants (4:1–24). Humanity no longer enjoyed God's rest; instead, they experienced guilt and fear. So they fled from God and developed a proud civilization.

Independence from God resulted in the downward drift of human life (5:1–6:8). The genealogy of 5:1–32 begins by recalling that human beings were made in God's image and were blessed by him (5:1–2). As the genealogy is traced, the death of each generation reminds the reader of the curse, with Enoch providing a ray of hope that the curse is not final. In 6:1–8, we learn that God regretted having made humans and decided to judge the earth. Noah, however, received God's favor and provided a source of hope (5:29; 6:8).

The next section (6:9–9:29) brings the curse of judgment through the flood followed by blessing in a new beginning. A renewed creation began, purged of the abominable evil that had invaded and ruined the human race.

The world's population expanded into various nations (10:1–11:9) whose people were bent on disobedience. The population of the earth by Shem,

#### TIMELINE

2166 / 1990 BC\*  
*Abraham is born*

2091 / 1915 BC  
*Abraham moves to Canaan*

2080 / 1904 BC  
*Ishmael is born*

2066 / 1890 BC  
*Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, Isaac is born*

2006 / 1830 BC  
*Jacob and Esau are born*

1898 / 1722 BC  
*Joseph is sold into slavery*

1885 / 1709 BC  
*Joseph begins governing Egypt*

1876 / 1661 BC  
*Jacob moves to Egypt*

1446 / 1270 BC  
*Israel leaves Egypt (the Exodus), moves to Mount Sinai*

1406 / 1230 BC  
*Israel enters Canaan*

\* The two dates harmonize with the traditional "early" chronology and a more recent "late" chronology of the Exodus. All dates are approximate. Please see "Chronology: Abraham to Joshua," p. 118.

## 4. TIMELINE

A timeline can be found in the margin of nearly all book introductions. The timelines show when the events in each book of the Bible took place and what was going on at the time. We can refer to the timeline while reading the setting and summary for the book, and again while reading the book, to help clarify and reinforce how the events fit into the flow of history.

## 5. SUMMARY

*What is the structure and flow of ideas in each book of the Bible?* The Summary provides just that—a brief summary of the contents of the book. If the book is narrative, the Summary tells its story. If the book is a letter, the Summary explains its contents and the flow of its reasoning. If the book is an anthology, the Summary describes the structure and contents of the collection. If we have in mind the flow of the book, we can better understand each individual passage.

## 6. OUTLINE

Each book includes an outline with up to three levels of headings. In the introduction, we provide the first level of the outline to give the reader an overview. The full outline is embedded in the NLT text as running headings. These book outlines follow the literary structure of the book—how the authors themselves thought about the organization and flow of ideas.

## 7. AUTHOR, DATE, AND OTHER HISTORICAL ISSUES

*What do we know about who wrote this book and when it was written? What are the difficulties in determining the historical facts?* Even though these issues might not be familiar ground, they are important. Understanding these things can help us appreciate the complexity of the Bible. Far from undermining confidence in Scripture, the issues discussed here give us a greater appreciation of how magnificent Scripture truly is. At the same time, we learn to be humble in how we interpret God's word.

## 8. MEANING AND MESSAGE

*What is the message of each book of the Bible? What is its significance now?* Here's where the rubber meets the road. Everything in a book's introduction—setting, summary, author, date, genre—is intended to prepare us to understand what that book of the Bible has to say, its message and significance. Reading these paragraphs carefully and reflectively will give us the keys to understanding that book of the Bible.

become a great nation. The book closes with the promise of the Lord's coming to rescue his people from Egypt (50:24-26).

*"God rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. And he blessed the seventh day. . . ." And we ourselves will be a "seventh day" when we shall be filled with his blessing and remade by his sanctification. . . . Only when we are remade by God and perfected by a greater grace shall*

### AUTHORSHIP

Both Scripture and tradition attribute the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy) to Moses. No one was better qualified than Moses to have written this book. Since he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), he had the literary skills to collect and edit Israel's traditions and records and to compose this theological treatise. His unique communion with God gave him the spiritual illumination, understanding, and inspiration needed to guide him. He had good reason to write this work—to provide Israel with the theological and historical foundation for the Exodus and the covenant at Sinai, and to establish the new nation in accord with the promises made to their ancestors.

Most scholars, however, do not accept that Moses wrote Genesis. The prevailing critical view, called the *Documentary Hypothesis*, is that Genesis was compiled from various sources by different groups of people. In such approaches, there is seldom a word about divine revelation or inspiration. For those who understand the Bible as God's inspired word, such theories often seem unnecessarily complicated and conjectural. Genesis can be understood much more straightforwardly as the product of Moses' genius under God's inspiration with later editorial adjustments. (See further "Introduction to the Pentateuch: Authorship," p. 12).

### COMPOSITION

*Genesis is the product of a profound divine plan, and it is the*

*of the promises made to their forefathers. Genesis is therefore a unique work. Theology, history, and tradition come together to instruct God's people and prepare them for blessing.*

### MEANING AND MESSAGE

Israel's most important questions were answered by the Genesis narratives. Life and death, the possession of the land of Canaan, and how Israel ended up in Egypt are explained as God's providential working in history. Israel was part of God's plan in this world. His plan had

the sun as a god, but in Genesis the sun serves the Creator's wishes (1:14-18). The book of Genesis is a cemetery for lifeless myths and dead gods. Genesis is not myth.

**Etiology.** A number of scholars describe the Genesis narratives as *etiologies*, stories that explain the causes of factual reality or traditional beliefs. The implication is that such stories were made up for explanatory purposes and do not describe historical events. For example, if one says that the story of Cain and Abel was made up to explain why shepherds and farmers do not get along, the account loses its integrity as factual history.

Etiological elements certainly occur in Genesis, because the book gives the foundation and rationale for almost everything that Israel would later do. For example, the creation account of Gen 2 ends with the explanation, "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother. . . ." The event as it happened explains why marriage was conducted the way it was, but to say that a story explains something is quite different from saying that the story was fabricated to explain it. The stories of Genesis are not fictional tales invented to explain later customs and beliefs.

**History.** Many scholars object to regarding Genesis as history, for two basic reasons: (1) Genesis explains events as caused by God, and the inclusion of the supernatural is regarded as proof that the material is theological reflection and thus not historically reliable; and (2) the events in Genesis cannot be validated from outside sources; no other records have demonstrated that Abraham existed or that any of his family history occurred.

*Genesis is not interested in parading Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples of morality. Therefore, it does not moralize on them. [Genesis] is bringing together the promises of God to the patriarchs and the faithfulness of God in keeping those promises.*

VICTOR P. HAMILTON  
*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, p. 46

the greater good, build the faith of his people, and ultimately triumph over all evil (cp. Rom 8:28).

**God's Plan.** Genesis begins with the presupposition that God exists and that he has revealed himself in word and deed to Israel's ancestors. It does not argue for the existence of God; it simply begins with God and shows how everything falls into place when the sovereign God works out his plan to establish Israel as the means of restoring blessing to the whole world.

**God's Rule.** Genesis is the fitting introduction to the founding of theocracy, the rule of God over all creation that was to be established through his chosen people. Genesis lays down the initial revelation of God's sovereignty. He is the Lord of the universe who will move heaven and earth to bring about his plan. He desires to bless people, but he will not tolerate rebellion and unbelief. His promises are great, and he is fully able to bring them to fruition. To participate in his plan has always required faith, for without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb 11:6).

**FURTHER READING**

VICTOR P. HAMILTON  
*The Book of Genesis* (1990)

DEREK KIDNER  
*Genesis* (1967)

KENNETH A. MATHEWS  
*Genesis* (1996)

ALLEN P. ROSS  
*Creation and Blessing* (1988)  
*Genesis in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1 (2008)

GORDON WENHAM  
*Genesis 1–15* (1987)  
*Genesis 16–50* (1994)

## SECTION INTRODUCTIONS

For each major section of the Bible, the section introduction gives an overview of the books in that section and discusses issues that affect the interpretation of those books. (Not shown)

## CHRONOLOGY ARTICLES

For each major period of biblical history, the chronology article provides a historical overview and discusses key issues regarding historical context. Each article includes a timeline of events during that period of history. (Not shown)

## 9. EPIGRAPHS

Sometimes other authors say insightful things about a book of the Bible, or they make a poignant observation about something that a given book discusses. The editors have gathered some of the best quotations they could find about each book and put them in the margins of the book introductions, to stimulate thinking and to promote meaningful interaction with each book of the Bible.

## 10. FURTHER READING

*Where can we learn more about each book of the Bible?* The *NLT Study Bible* has plenty of resources for a lifetime journey of reading, studying, and discovering the riches of Scripture. Some readers, however, will want to go even further. At the end of each book introduction, the editors have recommended some of the resources that have helped them the most in studying and understanding that particular book of the Bible. They've chosen materials that are available in the general market—no seminary required! Nearly all of these books are as close as a visit to a local or online Christian retailer.

## 11. RUNNING OUTLINES

The NLT text of each book includes a running outline to show how the sections of that book fit together. The numbered top level of the outline matches the short outline in the book introduction. The second- and third-level headings describe the book's structure in greater detail, down to the level of individual passages. These outlines follow the literary structure of the book, so they show what the author of the book thought about how the book was put together.

## 12. THEME NOTES

*How does the NLT Study Bible explain the themes of the Bible?* Theme notes develop the main themes and topics that arise in each book. They are placed alongside particularly relevant passages but go beyond the passage at hand and extend to other books of the Bible. References for further study are included in the margin.

The topics in the theme notes have been chosen based on the major themes that occur in Scripture. They provide the first steps in developing a biblical theology without attempting to formulate a specific doctrinal system (such as reformed, charismatic, or Baptist). Because of this, the theme notes are designed to make us think and will stretch us to consider the teaching of Scripture more fully, whatever our doctrinal background.

### GENESIS 1:1

#### 1. CREATION (1:1-2:3) In the Beginning (1:1-2)

**1** In the beginning God <sup>a</sup>created the <sup>b</sup>heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the <sup>3</sup>Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

*Six Days of Creation (1:3-31)*

*Day One: Light, Darkness*

<sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

*Day Two: Sky, Waters*

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup>God called the space "sky." And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

*Day Three: Land, Sea, Vegetation*

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas."

**1:1**  
Ps 89:11; Job 26:10  
Isa 42:5; 48:13  
John 1:1, 2  
\*bara (1:2, 4)  
\*Gen 1:2, 7  
\*shamayim (20064)  
\*Exod 16:4  
\*yereh (8776)  
\*Gen 9:11  
**1:2**  
Isa 45:18  
\*raqia (7307)  
\*Gen 45:27  
**1:3**  
Isa 45:7  
2 Cor 4:6  
**1:4**  
Job 26:10  
Ps 136:5-6  
**1:9**  
Ps 95:5  
Prov 8:29  
Jer 5:22  
2 Pet 3:5

## The Creation (1:1-2:3)

The creation account in Genesis is foundational to the message of the entire Bible, not just of Genesis or the Pentateuch. Understanding the early chapters of Genesis is thus crucial to forming a biblical worldview.

This part of Genesis deals with fundamental questions: Who created the world, and for what purpose? Why is the world in its present condition? Genesis answers these questions, dispelling the idolatry that Israel had acquired from their pagan masters in Egypt. In the Promised Land, they would also be surrounded by people who believed in many false gods and worshiped created things rather than the Creator. Genesis taught Israel that the one true God created and has absolute authority over all things; he alone is worthy of worship.

Every worldview attempts to explain where the world came from, what is wrong with the world, and how it can be set right again. The creation account in Genesis teaches that as God made the world, it was "very good" (1:31). Through creation, God turned disorder into restful order and emptiness into the fullness of abundant life. In this environment, humans enjoyed unbroken fellowship with their Creator until their rebellion severed that fellowship and implanted evil in human hearts (ch 3; see chs 4-6). The world's evil does not come from some defect in creation; God put the world under a curse because of human rebellion.

Since that first rebellion, humans have been alienated from the Creator and no longer recognize his presence and authority. This alienation results in shame, fractured relationships with God and other humans, estrangement from the rest of creation, and death (3:7-19). Since that time, God has been working purposefully in history to restore humans to fellowship with him, which he is doing through Jesus Christ. Restored humans are a new creation (Gal 6:15); through Jesus, eternal life is open to all and God will one day renew all things (see Isa 65:17-25; Rom 8:19-22). The whole cosmos will be made new (Rev 21:1).

Ps 33:6-9  
Prov 3:19; 8:22-31  
Isa 40:26-28; 45:11-12, 18-19  
Jer 10:11-16  
John 1:1-4  
Rom 8:18-25  
2 Cor 5:17  
Col 1:15-20  
Rev 4:11; 21:1-5

1:1-2:3 These verses introduce the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and teach Israel that the world was created, ordered, and populated by the one true God and not by the gods of surrounding nations. • God blessed three specific things: animal life (1:22-25), human life (1:27), and the Sabbath day (2:3). This trilogy of blessings highlights the Creator's plan: Humankind was made in God's image to enjoy sovereign dominion over the creatures of the earth and to participate in God's Sabbath rest.

1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (or in the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . or when God began to cre-

ate the heavens and the earth, . . .). This statement summarizes the entire creation account (1:3-2:3). Already a key question—Who created the world?—is answered (see also Prov 8:22-31; John 1:1-3). Although the modern naturalistic mindset rejects this question and that of creation's purpose, Genesis affirms God's role and purpose in creation.

• The common name for God (Hebrew *'elohim*) emphasizes his grand supremacy. The word *'elohim* is plural, but the verbs used with it are usually singular, reflecting the consistent scriptural proclamation of a single, all-powerful God. • *created* (Hebrew *bara*): In the OT, God is always the agent of creation

expressed by this verb. It describes the making of something fresh and new—notably the cosmos (1:1, 21; 2:3), humankind (1:27), the Israelite nation (Isa 43:1), and the future new creation (Isa 65:17). • *The heavens and the earth* are the entire ordered cosmos.

1:2 This verse gives the background for the summary in 1:1 and the detailed description in 1:3-2:3. God's creative utterances bring order to the chaotic state of the universe. • *formless . . . empty* (Hebrew *tohu . . . bohlu*): This terse idiom means something like "wild and waste." It sets a stark contrast to the final ordered state of the heavens and the earth (1:1). • *deep waters*

for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

<sup>3</sup>In 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.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. <sup>5</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. <sup>6</sup>And 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.” <sup>7</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

**4. THE ACCOUNT OF NOAH'S FAMILY**

[6:9–9:29]

*The Story of Noah*

<sup>9</sup>This 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. <sup>10</sup>Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence.

6:4 Num 13:33  
Jude 1:6-7  
6:5 Ps 14:1-3  
6:6 Gen 32:14  
Num 23:19  
1 Sam 15:11, 35  
2 Sam 24:16  
6:7 Deut 29:20  
Deut 12:25a  
\* Ps 51:10  
6:8 Gen 33:17  
6:9 Job 1:1  
Ezek 14:14  
\*Amos 9:24b  
\* Gen 17:1  
6:11 Deut 31:29  
Judg 2:19  
Ezek 8:17

**1 NOAH** (6:8-22)

Noah was the son of Lamech, a descendant of Seth (5:3-29). Lamech might have hoped that Noah (whose name means “rest” or “relief”) would ease the curse of hardship in working the ground (see note on 5:29). God used Noah to help relieve the world of evil.

God intended to destroy creation because of pervasive human wickedness (6:1-7; see Matt 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27), but he decided to preserve Noah (6:8). God gave Noah, a righteous and blameless man (6:9), precise instructions for building the ark in which only the eight people of his family would be saved, along with every kind of creature (6:14–8:19). When Noah and his family finally emerged from the ark after the flood, Noah pleased God by building an altar and sacrificing burnt offerings. God promised that he would never again flood the whole earth or disrupt the sequence of the seasons, despite human sin (8:20–9:17).

Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. All the nations of the earth descended from them (9:18-19). When Noah became drunk on wine from his vineyard, his sons and their descendants were cursed or blessed in accord with how they responded to him (9:22-27). Noah lived for 950 years, including 350 years after the flood (9:28-29); he is an example of righteousness, obedience, courage, and faith (see Ezek 14:12-20; Heb 11:7; 2 Pet 2:5).

Gen 5:28–10:1  
1 Chr 1:4  
Isa 54:9  
Ezek 14:12-20  
Matt 24:37-38  
Luke 3:36; 17:26-27  
Heb 11:7  
1 Pet 3:20-21  
2 Pet 2:5

society and allow human wickedness to run its full course. Others think it means that God would withdraw his life-giving breath from humans at an earlier age (*ruach*, the Hebrew term for “spirit,” can also mean “breath”; see 6:17; 7:22; see also Ps 104:29-30). • **normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years** (literally his days will be 120 years): It is possible that this was a new restriction on the number of years individuals would generally be allowed to live (so the NLT). However, for generations after the flood, humans lived well beyond 120 years (see, e.g., 11:10-26). An alternative interpretation sees this as a 120-year grace period before the arrival of the flood (see Jon 3:4; Matt 24:37-38; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 2:5).

6:4 giant Nephilites (Hebrew *nephilim*): The term may mean “fallen ones.” The context implies that they were the offspring of the “sons of God” and would be destroyed in the flood. Num 13:31-33 uses the same term to describe other giants who were hostile toward God's

people and would also be destroyed (see also Deut 2:11, which connects the Anakite *nephilim* with another group called the *rephaim*).

6:5 **everything they thought or imagined** (literally *every intention of the thoughts of their hearts*): In the OT, the heart is the core of volition, thought, and morality (see Prov 4:23). Wicked actions stem from a corrupt inner life.

• **consistently and totally evil**: Strong language captures the pervasiveness, depth, and persistence of human wickedness. Human nature continued to be corrupt even after the flood (see 8:21).

6:6 **the Lord was sorry**: The extent of human wickedness made the Lord regret having created them (see also 6:7; cp. 1 Sam 15:11, 35). • **It broke his heart**: The evil in humanity's heart (6:5) pained God greatly. Sending the flood was a heart-wrenching act on God's part.

6:7 **wipe . . . from the . . . earth**: As Adam and Eve were banished from the garden sanctuary (3:23), all of

humankind would be expunged from God's good creation. • **every living thing**: Human sin had so corrupted the earth that judgment fell on the animals and birds over which they had dominion (see 1:28 and note). The special role of humans in the created order (1:28-30) means that nature is affected by human moral choices (see 8:1; Job 38:41; Hos 4:3; Rom 8:19-22).

6:8 **Noah** and his godly life stand in stark contrast to the sinfulness of the rest of the people.

6:9 **the account**: See note on 2:4 • **a righteous man, the only blameless person**: The text does not claim that Noah was without sin (see Rom 5:12-14). Noah's righteousness and blamelessness came about because **he walked in close fellowship with God**. See also 7:1; 17:1; Heb 11:7.

6:11-13 See 6:5-7. • **violence** (Hebrew *khamas*): Murder had especially corrupted the line of Cain (4:8, 23-24).

**13. PERSON PROFILES**

The *NLT Study Bible* includes person profiles that describe the lives of the individuals who inhabit the pages of Scripture. Each of these people contributes significantly to the story and message of the Bible. Their lives instruct us with examples and counter-examples, and their stories help us better understand the Bible, its world, and its message. Their relationship with God, or lack of it, helps us to understand how we can have a relationship with God.

**14. STUDY NOTES**

Sometimes readers look at a note in a study Bible to understand the meaning of a verse and find themselves asking, “So what?” about a seemingly unrelated fact. The notes in the *NLT Study Bible* have been developed with the “So what?” test in mind—the editors’ goal is that the study notes will clearly help us as readers to understand the verse or passage better.

The notes focus on the meaning and message of Scripture, not just facts. This means that there are notes on words, phrases, sentences, verses, paragraphs, and whole sections. The editors have included historical and literary notes to help draw us into the world of the Bible and the context in which it was originally read and heard.

Also included in the study notes is the full NLT textual footnote apparatus, which identifies variations in the Hebrew and Greek text as well as providing alternate translation possibilities.

Every excerpt from the NLT text is easily identified in bold italic type.

## 15. CROSS-REFERENCE SYSTEM

Some cross-reference systems are based on connections between individual words, without regard to whether there is any connection in meaning between the two verses or passages. With the *NLT Study Bible*, the cross-references relate to the meaning of the whole verse or passage, so the cross-references are always directly applicable.

To compare specific ideas within a verse, the study notes at the bottom of the page often include cross-references for individual words and phrases, along with a brief explanation of the nature of the connection.

In the cross-reference system, parallel lines (//) show that a particular cross-reference is a parallel passage that describes the same events or says much the same thing. An asterisk (\*) is used to indicate where the NT quotes the OT.

## 16. PARALLEL PASSAGES

The NLT text indicates parallels with passages in other books. For example, the Gospel of Matthew has many parallels in Mark, Luke, and John. Similarly, the books of 2 Samuel through 2 Kings have many parallels to the books of 1–2 Chronicles. The parallel references are useful for making comparisons between different versions of the same events and gaining a deeper, fuller understanding of what was happening.

son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and of Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. <sup>33</sup>May their blood be on Joab and his descendants forever, and may the LORD grant peace forever to David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his throne."

<sup>34</sup>So Benaiah son of Jehoiada returned to the sacred tent and killed Joab, and he was buried at his home in the wilderness. <sup>35</sup>Then the king appointed Benaiah to command the army in place of Joab, and he installed Zadok the priest to take the place of Abiathar.

<sup>36</sup>The king then sent for Shimei and told him, "Build a house here in Jerusalem and live there. But don't step outside the city to go anywhere else. <sup>37</sup>On the day you so much as cross the Kidron Valley, you will surely die, and your blood will be on your own head."

<sup>38</sup>Shimei replied, "Your sentence is fair; I will do whatever my lord the king commands." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

<sup>39</sup>But three years later two of Shimei's slaves ran away to King Achish son of Maachah of Gath. When Shimei learned where they were, <sup>40</sup>he saddled his donkey and went to Gath to search for them. When he found them, he brought them back to Jerusalem.

<sup>41</sup>Solomon heard that Shimei had left Jerusalem and had gone to Gath and returned. <sup>42</sup>So the king sent for Shimei and demanded, "Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you not to go anywhere else or you

would surely die? And you replied, 'The sentence is fair; I will do as you say.' <sup>43</sup>Then why haven't you kept your oath to the LORD and obeyed my command?"

<sup>44</sup>The king also said to Shimei, "You certainly remember all the wicked things you did to my father, David. May the LORD now bring that evil on your own head. <sup>45</sup>But may I, King Solomon, receive the LORD's blessings, and may one of David's descendants always sit on this throne in the presence of the LORD." <sup>46</sup>Then, at the king's command, Benaiah son of Jehoiada took Shimei outside and killed him.

So the kingdom was now firmly in Solomon's grip.

### Solomon's Great Wisdom (3:1–4:34) Solomon Asks for Wisdom

1 Kgs 3:1–15 // 2 Chr 1:1–13

**3** Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David until he could finish building his palace and the Temple of the LORD and the wall around the city. <sup>2</sup>At that time the people of Israel sacrificed their offerings at local places of worship, for a temple honoring the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship. <sup>4</sup>The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings.

2:33  
2 Sam 3:29  
2:35  
1 Chr 29:22  
2:36  
2 Sam 16:5  
1 Kgs 2:3  
2:37  
2 Sam 15:23  
2:39  
1 Sam 27:2  
2:44  
1 Sam 25:39  
2 Sam 16:5-13  
2:45  
2 Sam 7:13  
2:46  
1 Kgs 2:12  
2 Chr 1:1  
3:1  
1 Kgs 7:8; 9:24  
3:2  
Lev 17:3-5  
Deut 12:13-14  
3:3  
Deut 6:5  
1 Kgs 9:4; 11:4, 6, 38  
Ps 31:23  
3:4-15  
// 2 Chr 1:2-13  
3:4  
1 Chr 16:39; 21:29  
2 Chr 1:2-3  
3:5  
1 Kgs 9:2-3  
Matt 1:20

2:36-38 The confinement of Shimei prevented him from reaching his kinsmen in Benjamin to stir up trouble for the king.

2:39-46 Shimei's journey to Gath, ostensibly to recover his runaway slaves, violated his agreement. Technically, he did not cross the Kidron Valley in going to Gath, but the penalty was understood by both parties to apply to Shimei's going anywhere else. Because Shimei violated his oath to the LORD (2:42) and because of his past hostilities toward David (2 Sam 16:5-13; 19:16-23), Solomon instructed Benaiah to execute him.

3:1 As was common in the ancient Near East, Solomon sealed a political alliance with the king of Egypt by marrying one of his daughters. The bestowal of an Egyptian princess and the city of Gezer to Solomon as a wedding present (9:16) demonstrated the Egyptians' high regard for him. The pharaoh was probably Siamun, of Egypt's weakened 21<sup>st</sup>

dynasty. The alliance was mutually beneficial: Pharaoh gained access to trade routes through Israel, while Solomon increased security on his southern border. Apparently, Solomon had previously married the Ammonite Naamah (see 11:42-43 with 14:21). • City of David: This section of Jerusalem was the old Jebusite city in the southern portion of the eastern ridge. When Solomon extended his building activities northward, he built a special palace for Pharaoh's daughter (7:8; 9:24; 2 Chr 9:11).

3:2-3 The Ark of the Covenant sat in David's tent in Jerusalem before the Temple was built, and the people . . . sacrificed their offerings at local places of worship (see note on 8:1). However, this detracted from unified worship at a central sanctuary (12:1-24) and increased the danger of mixing with Canaanite religious practices. Israel's worship at such places was forbidden (Deut 12:1-14).

3:4-15 God's gift of wisdom to Solomon

is narrated as a *chiasm* (a symmetrical arrangement in which sections A and B are mirrored by sections B' and A'), drawing the focus in on Solomon's transaction with the Lord:

A: While he sacrificed at Gibeon . . . the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream (3:4-5).

B: Solomon prayed for wisdom to govern his people equitably and efficiently (3:6-9).

B': The Lord favorably answered his request and granted additional blessings (3:10-14).

A': Solomon awoke from the dream and offered additional sacrifices to the Lord (3:15).

3:4 The city of Gibeon lay six miles northwest of Jerusalem. Its altar, the most important of these [local] places of worship (literally the great high place), accommodated sacrifices of royal proportions. Gibeon was also the site of the Tabernacle (1 Chr 16:39-40; 21:29; 2 Chr 1:2-6).

**1. CREATION (1:1–2:3)**

*In the Beginning (1:1-2)*

**1** In the beginning God <sup>a</sup>created the <sup>b</sup>heavens and the <sup>c</sup>earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the <sup>d</sup>Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

*Six Days of Creation (1:3-31)*

*Day One: Light, Darkness*

<sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

*Day Two: Sky, Waters*

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup>God called the space "sky." And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

*Day Three: Land, Sea, Vegetation*

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas."

1:1  
Ps 89:11; 102:25  
Isa 42:5; 48:13  
John 1:1-2  
Heb 1:12,5f  
\* Gen 1:27  
\*shamayim (8064)  
\* Exod 16:4  
\*erets (0776)  
\* Gen 9:11  
  
1:2  
Isa 45:18  
\*ruakh (7307)  
\* Gen 45:27  
  
1:3  
Isa 45:7  
2 Cor 4:6  
  
1:4  
Job 26:10  
Ps 136:5-6  
  
1:5  
Ps 95:5  
Prov 8:29  
Jer 5:22  
2 Pet 3:5

**The Creation (1:1–2:3)**

The creation account in Genesis is foundational to the message of the entire Bible, not just of Genesis or the Pentateuch. Understanding the early chapters of Genesis is thus crucial to forming a biblical worldview.

Ps 33:6-9  
Prov 8:19; 8:22-31  
Isa 40:26-28; 45:11;  
51:16-17  
Job 1:1-11

Each occurrence is indicated in the NLT text with a superscript letter (a, b, c, etc.).

**17. WORD STUDY SYSTEM**

The *NLT Study Bible* includes a word study system in the cross-reference column. Because the NLT is a dynamic translation, a particular word in Greek or Hebrew is not always translated the same way, but is translated in a manner that is appropriate for the context. This makes word studies richer and more productive, because the range of meaning for a particular Greek or Hebrew word becomes very clear, and it is easier to avoid common misunderstandings about what the word means.

There are word studies for 100 Hebrew words and 100 Greek words. For each word, the editors have included enough occurrences to illustrate the range of meanings for that word. Each occurrence is indicated in the NLT text with a superscript letter (a, b, c, etc.). The same superscript letter occurs in the cross-reference column under that verse. After the superscript letter the Hebrew or Greek word is given, followed by a reference number that matches the glossary at the back and many widely available study tools, such as *Strong's Concordance*. On the next line is a chain-reference link to the next highlighted occurrence of the word. The word study system thus opens up a whole world of Greek and Hebrew word study.

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*Day Three: Land, Sea, Vegetation*

1:1  
Ps 89:11; 102:25  
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<sup>a</sup>bara' (1254)  
\* Gen 1:27  
<sup>b</sup>shamayim (8064)  
\* Exod 16:4  
<sup>c</sup>erets (0776)  
\* Gen 9:11

1:2  
Isa 45:18  
<sup>d</sup>ruakh (7307)  
\* Gen 45:27

1:3  
Isa 45:7  
2 Cor 4:6

1:4

## 18. CHARTS

Charts organize textual information into a form that is easy to understand quickly.

## 19. MAPS

Maps throughout the study materials visualize the events and places mentioned in the text of Scripture.

sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons,

God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and

Formless	CHAOS	Empty
DAY 1 (1:3-5) Light, Dark	HEAVENS	DAY 4 (1:14-19) Sun, Moon, Stars
DAY 2 (1:6-8) Water, Sky	WATER & SKY	DAY 5 (1:20-23) Birds, Fish
DAY 3 (1:9-13) Sea, Land	EARTH	DAY 6 (1:24-31) Animals, Humans
Formed	COSMOS	Filled
	DAY 7 (2:2-3) Rest	

**The Structure of the Creation Account (1:1-2:3).** God transformed chaos into the present cosmos. In the first three days, he transformed the formless void into the structured universe—the HEAVENS (outer space), the WATER and SKY, and the EARTH (cp. Exod 20:11; Ps 135:6). In the second three days, he populated each empty realm. The seventh day (2:1-3) stands apart: As God's day of rest, it provides the weekly pattern for human activity (Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17) and speaks of the rest that God promised to those who live by faith in him (see Heb 3:7-4:11).

two collections of water (cp. Job 37:18; Ezek 1:22). In the ancient Near East, the cosmos was understood as a three-tier system, with rain originating from the outermost tier (see 7:11-12 and note).  
1:9-10 *Let the waters . . . flow together:* Other ancient cultures viewed the sea as a hostile force. Genesis shows God as further restraining chaos (see note on 1:2) by prescribing specific boundaries for the sea. The flood—an act of God's judgment (6:7)—undid these boundaries and returned the earth to chaos (7:1-24).  
1:14-31 On days 4-6, God filled the domains that had been formed during days 1-3 (1:3-13).  
1:14 *Let them . . . mark the seasons, days, and years:* The movement of the heavenly bodies defined Israel's liturgical calendar, whose roots in creation gave a sacred timing to Israel's festivals and celebrations (see Exod 23:15; Lev 23:4).

(Hebrew: *tohu*): Some scholars say this (Hebrew: *tohu*)—*formless*—is a rest.

(cp. 1:6-8), by his creative word: Light

1:16 In the surrounding pagan cultures, the two great pillars were not joined

I would soon die. "See, there is a small city . . . after that Lot left Zoar because he was  
lame nearby. Please let me go there instead; afraid of the people there, and he went to



**19:14** Lot's warning words were not taken seriously because of his hypocrisy. It seemed that there would not be even ten righteous people in the city.

**The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16-19:38).** The two angels apparently traveled, as shown, from Abraham's camp at the OAKS OF MAMRE to destroy SODOM and GOMORRAH. Lot and his daughters took refuge at ZOAR, then moved eastward into the mountains of MOAB. Lot fathered two sons by his daughters; the two sons became the nations of MOAB (see Num 21:10-20; 22:1-25:3; Deut 23:3, 6; Judg 3:12-30; Ruth 1:1-6) and AMMON (see Num 21:24; Deut 2:19-37; 23:3; Judg 10:6-12:3; 1 Sam 10:27-11:11).

mercifully spared Lot for Abraham's sake (18:23; 19:29). Lot deserved judgment for his way of life, but he was a believer at heart and the Lord rescued him (2 Pet 2:7-8). • Lot is not alone in his conflicted lifestyle. Countless believers fall in with a corrupt world rather than flee a doomed society. God's people, living in a pagan world, must remain separate (1 Jn 2:15-17). The corrupt world system awaits God's coming judgment, which will be to

delivered. He wanted to live in the small town of Zoar (*little place*).

**19:23-25** Cp. Luke 17:29. The eruption of Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii in 79 AD, as well as recent natural disasters, show how quickly a thorough catastrophe like this could happen.

**19:26 looked back:** The verb indicates prolonged, intense gazing toward the world she loved, not a curious glance (15:5; Exod 33:8; Num 21:9; 1 Sam 2:32; cp. Exod 3:6). *Lot's wife* was too attached to Sodom to follow God's call of grace, so she was included in the judgment as she lingered on the valley slopes. Christ's return to judge the world will be as sudden and devastating as the destruction of Sodom (Luke 17:32-37). Those who crave the life of this wicked world will lose this world and the next.

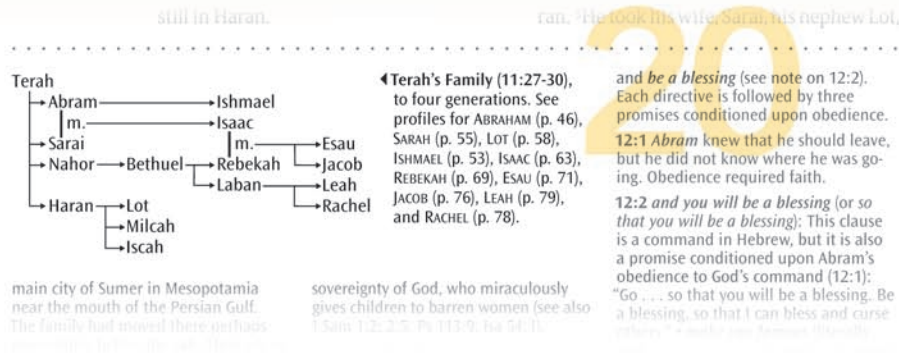
**19:29** God honored Abraham's intercession (cf. 18:23-32), but Lot's entire world was gone because he lived by instinct and desire, not by faith in God. He could no longer live in the good land he

## VISUAL AIDS

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the *NLT Study Bible* has tens of thousands of words' worth of visual information. These visual aids include maps, timelines, illustrations, charts, and diagrams.

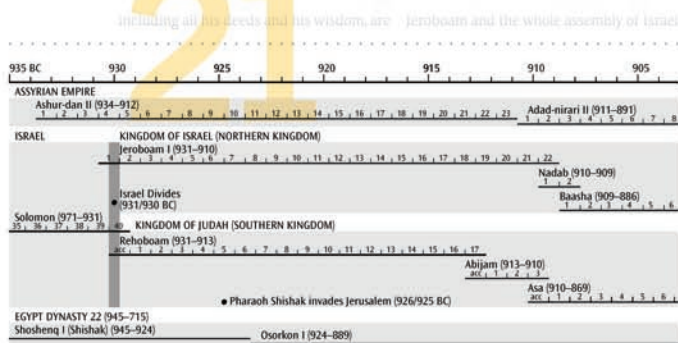
## 20. DIAGRAMS

Diagrams organize information visually in order to show relationships. For example, the genealogy of Terah, Abraham's father, helps sort out the relationships among many of the people who play a role in the book of Genesis.



## 21. TIMELINES

Timelines show when in history various events took place and how they relate to other events in the Bible and in the surrounding world. The Bible is a record of history, and it is fascinating and stimulating to see just how the events of the Bible fit into recorded history as known from the surrounding cultures.

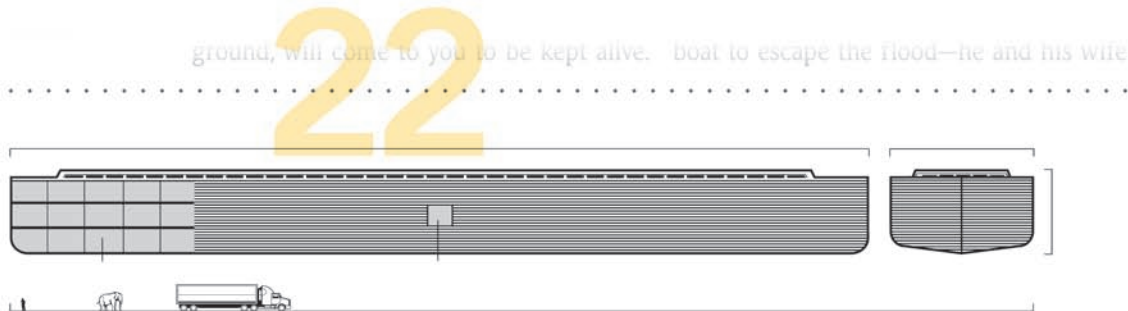


▲ Israel and Judah, 935–903 BC (11:41–15:34). Each king's regnal years are numbered according to his own system of accounting (see "OT Chronology: Israel's Monarchy," p. 0000). Each king's line on the chart runs from the beginning of the year in which his accession occurred to the end of the year in which he died. • SOLOMON'S fortieth and final regnal year began in the fall (the month of Tishri) of 931 BC; his death and the division of the kingdom occurred sometime prior to the spring (the month of Nisan) of 930 BC. • The reign of JEROBOAM I started after that of REHOBAM, but Jeroboam's first regnal year was counted from the previous spring. • PHARAOH SHISHAK of Egypt invaded JERUSALEM during Rehoboam's fifth regnal year (see 14:25-28).

11:38 *an enduring dynasty*: Jeroboam had a great monument. God promised pending difficulty, *tried to kill Jeroboam*. King Shishak of Egypt later invaded tribes, had been a strategic site and religious center since the pre-Israelite

## 22. ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations help visualize objects that might be difficult to imagine without a picture. For example, the illustration of Noah's Ark shows just how big that floating storage box was and how much it was able to hold.



▲ Noah's Ark (6:14-16). An ark built to the dimensions specified in Genesis would have been immense. Its ratio of length to width (6 to 1) is the most stable known and is used for the design of modern tankers and freight-hauling ships. The ark was able to carry 20,000 tons of cargo; the required number of young adult land animals would have occupied less than half of the available space. The design given was perfect for the ark's function.

6:14 *a large boat*: Traditionally rendered as a cube with a ramp (4:11) with no sail or rudder. God also brought These animals would procreate and