



## READING GUIDE — WEEK 1

CREATION: THE BEGINNING OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT  
Genesis 1-4, 6-9

### Genesis 1

#### THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

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

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

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

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

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

9 Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened.10 God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good.11 Then 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 came." And that is what happened.12 The 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.

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

14 Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to sep-

arate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.15 Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth." And that is what happened.16 God made two great lights; the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars.17 God set these lights in the sky to light the earth,18 to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

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

20 Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind."21 So 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.22 Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." 23 And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

24 Then 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.25 God 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.

26 Then 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.

**28** Then 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."

**29** Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.**30** And 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.

**31** 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 2

**1** So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.**2** On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested\* from all his work.**3** And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

**4** This 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,**5** neither 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.**6** Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land.**7** Then 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.

**8** Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made.**9** The 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.

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

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

**18** Then 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."**19** So 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.**20** He 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.

**21** So 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.**22** Then 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.'"

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

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

## Genesis 3

### THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

**1** 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."

**6** The 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.**7** At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

**8** When 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.**9** Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

**10** He 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?"

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

**13** Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

**14** Then 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."

**16** Then 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.\*"

**17** And 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

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

**22** Then 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!"**23** So 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.**24** After 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.

## Genesis 4

### CAIN AND ABEL

**1** 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!"**2** Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground.**3** When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD.**4** Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift,**5** but 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?"**7** You 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."

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

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

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

**10** But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!**11** Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood.**12** No 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."

**13** Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment\* is too great for me to bear!**14** You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made

me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

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

### THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

**17** Cain 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.**18** Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of\* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

**19** Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah.**20** Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents.**21** His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute.**22** Lamech'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.**23** One 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

**25** Adam 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."**26** When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

## Genesis 6

### A WORLD GONE WRONG

**1** Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them.**2** The sons of God saw the beautiful women\* and took any they wanted as their wives.**3** Then 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."

**4** 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.

**5** 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.**6** So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart.**7** 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."**8** But Noah found favor with the LORD.

### THE STORY OF NOAH

**9** 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.**10** Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**11** Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence.**12** God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt.**13** So 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!"

**14** "Build a large boat\* from cypress wood\* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior.**15** Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet

high.\***16** Leave 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.**18** But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives.**19** Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood.**20** Pairs 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.**21** And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

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

## Genesis 7

### THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

**1** 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.**2** Take 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.**3** Also 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.**4** Seven 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."

**5** So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

**6** Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth.**7** He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives.**8** With 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.<sup>9</sup> They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah.<sup>10</sup> After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

<sup>11</sup> When 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.<sup>12</sup> The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

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

<sup>17</sup> For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth.<sup>18</sup> As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth,<sup>20</sup> rising more than twenty-two feet\* above the highest peaks.<sup>21</sup> All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people.<sup>22</sup> Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died.<sup>23</sup> God 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.<sup>24</sup> And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

## Genesis 8

### THE FLOOD RECEDES

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped.<sup>3</sup> So the

floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days,<sup>4</sup> exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.<sup>5</sup> Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

<sup>6</sup> After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat<sup>7</sup> and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up.<sup>8</sup> He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground.<sup>9</sup> But 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.<sup>10</sup> After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again.<sup>11</sup> This 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.<sup>12</sup> He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup> Noah 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.<sup>14</sup> Two more months went by,\* and at last the earth was dry!

<sup>15</sup> Then God said to Noah,<sup>16</sup> "Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives.<sup>17</sup> Release 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."

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

<sup>20</sup> Then 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.\*<sup>21</sup> And 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.<sup>22</sup> As

long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

## Genesis 9

### GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT

**1** Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.**2** All 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.**3** I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.**4** But 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.**6** If 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.**7** Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth."

**8** Then God told Noah and his sons,**9** "I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants,**10** and 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.**11** Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

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

confirming with all the creatures on earth."

### NOAH'S SONS

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

**20** After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard.**21** One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent.**22** Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers.**23** Then 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.

**24** When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done.**25** Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

"May Canaan be cursed!

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

**26** Then 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."

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

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