

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JANUARY 6-12

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 1-2

"Jehovah Creates Life on Earth"

(Genesis 1:3, 4) And God said: "Let there be light." Then there was light. ⁴ After that God saw that the light was good, and God began to divide the light from the darkness.

(Genesis 1:6) Then God said: "Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let there be a division between the waters and the waters."

(Genesis 1:9) Then God said: "Let the waters under the heavens be collected together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

(Genesis 1:11) Then God said: "Let the earth cause grass to sprout, seed-bearing plants and fruit trees according to their kinds, yielding fruit along with seed on the earth." And it was so.

it-1 527-528

Creation

When God said on Day One, "Let light come to be," diffused light evidently penetrated the cloud layers even though the sources of that light could not yet be discerned from the earth's surface. It seems that this was a gradual process, as is indicated by translator J. W. Watts: "And gradually light came into existence." (Ge 1:3, *A Distinctive Translation of Genesis*) God brought about a division between the light and the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night. This indicates that the earth was rotating on its axis as it revolved around the sun, so that its hemispheres, eastern and western, could enjoy periods of light and darkness. —Ge 1:3, 4.

On Day Two God made an expanse by causing a division to occur "between the waters and the waters." Some waters remained on the earth, but a great amount of water was raised high above the surface of the earth, and in between these two there came to be an expanse. God called the expanse Heaven, but this was with relation to the earth, as the waters suspended above the expanse are not said to have enclosed stars or other bodies of the outer heavens.—Ge 1:6-8; see EXPANSE.

On Day Three by God's miracle-working power the waters on the earth were brought together and dry land appeared, God calling it Earth. It was also on this day that, through no chance factors or evolutionary processes, God acted to superimpose the life principle upon atoms of matter, so that grass, vegetation, and fruit trees were brought into existence. Each of these three general divisions was capable of reproducing according to its "kind."—Ge 1:9-13.

(Genesis 1:14) Then God said: "Let there be luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night, and they will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years.

(Genesis 1:20) Then God said: "Let the waters swarm with living creatures, and let flying creatures fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."

(Genesis 1:24) Then God said: "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds, domestic animals and creeping animals and wild animals of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.

(Genesis 1:27) And God went on to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them.

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Creation

It is also noteworthy that at Genesis 1:16 the Hebrew verb *ba-ra'*, meaning "create," is not used. Instead, the Hebrew verb *'a-sah'*, meaning "make," is employed. Since the sun, moon, and stars are included in "the heavens" mentioned in Genesis 1:1, they were created long before Day Four. On the fourth day God proceeded to "make" these celestial bodies occupy a new relationship toward earth's surface and the expanse above it. When it is said, "God put them in the expanse of the heavens to shine upon the earth," this would indicate that they now became discernible from the surface of the earth, as though they were in the expanse. Also, the luminaries were to "serve as signs and for seasons and for days and years," thus later providing guidance for man in various ways.—Ge 1:14.

Day Five was marked by the creation of the first nonhuman souls on earth. Not just *one* creature purposed by God to evolve into other forms, but literally *swarms* of living souls were then brought forth by divine power. It is stated: "God proceeded to create the great sea monsters and every living soul that moves about, which the waters swarmed forth according to their kinds, and every winged flying creature according to its kind." Pleased with what He had produced, God blessed them and, in effect, told them to "become many," which was possible, for these creatures of many different family kinds were divinely endowed with the ability to reproduce "according to their kinds."—Ge 1:20-23.

On Day Six "God proceeded to make the wild beast of the earth according to its kind and the domestic animal according to its kind and every moving animal of the ground according to its kind," such work being good, as were all of God's previous creative works.—Ge 1:24, 25.

Toward the end of the sixth day of creative activity, God brought into existence an entirely

new kind of creature, superior to the animals even though lower than the angels. This was man, created in God's image and after his likeness. While Genesis 1:27 briefly states concerning humankind "male and female he [God] created them," the parallel account at Genesis 2:7-9 shows that Jehovah God formed man out of the dust of the ground, blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul, for whom a paradise home and food were provided. In this case Jehovah used the elements of the earth in creative work and then, having formed man, He created the female of humankind using one of Adam's ribs as a base. (Ge 2:18-25) With the creation of the woman, man was complete as a "kind."—Ge 5: 1, 2.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 1:1) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

w15 6/1 5

How Science Affects Your Life

Age of the earth and the universe

Scientists estimate that the earth is about 4 billion years old and that the universe was born some 13 to 14 billion years ago. The Bible sets no date for the creation of the universe. In no place does it affirm that the earth is only a few thousand years old. The very first verse in the Bible reads: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) That general statement allows scientists to determine the age of the physical world according to sound scientific principles.

(Genesis 1:26) Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every creeping animal that is moving on the earth."

Jesus Christ

Not a co-Creator. The Son's share in the creative works, however, did not make him a co-Creator with his Father. The power for creation came from God through his holy spirit, or active force. (Ge 1:2; Ps 33:6) And since Jehovah is the Source of all life, all animate creation, visible and invisible, owes its life to him. (Ps 36:9) Rather than a co-Creator, then, the Son was the agent or instrumentality through whom Jehovah, the Creator, worked. Jesus himself credited God with the creation, as do all the Scriptures.—Mt 19:4-6; see CREATION.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 1:1-19) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and desolate, and there was darkness upon the surface of the watery deep, and God's active force was moving about over the surface of the waters. ³ And God said: "Let there be light." Then there was light. ⁴ After that God saw that the light was good, and God began to divide the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, but the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day. ⁶ Then God said: "Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let there be a division between the waters and the waters." ⁷ Then God went on to make the expanse and divided the waters beneath the expanse from the waters above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. ⁹ Then God said: "Let the waters under the heavens be collected together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, but the collecting of the waters, he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God

said: "Let the earth cause grass to sprout, seed-bearing plants and fruit trees according to their kinds, yielding fruit along with seed on the earth." And it was so. ¹² And the earth began to produce grass, seed-bearing plants and trees yielding fruit along with seed, according to their kinds. Then God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. ¹⁴ Then God said: "Let there be luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night, and they will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. ¹⁵ They will serve as luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to shine upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God went on to make the two great luminaries, the greater luminary for dominating the day and the lesser luminary for dominating the night, and also the stars. ¹⁷ Thus God put them in the expanse of the heavens to shine upon the earth ¹⁸ and to dominate by day and by night and to make a division between the light and the darkness. Then God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

JANUARY 13-19**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 3-5****"The Devastating Consequences of the First Lie"**

(Genesis 3:1-5) Now the serpent was the most cautious of all the wild animals of the field that Jehovah God had made. So it said to the woman: "Did God really say that you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" ² At this the woman said to the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. ³ But God has said about the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden: 'You

must not eat from it, no, you must not touch it; otherwise you will die.’” ⁴ At this the serpent said to the woman: “You certainly will not die. ⁵ For God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.”

w17.02 5 ¶19

Jehovah's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled!

⁹ Satan the Devil, using a serpent, fooled Eve into disobeying her Father, Jehovah. (**Read Genesis 3:1-5**; Rev. 12:9) Satan made an issue of the fact that God's human children were not allowed to eat “from every tree of the garden.” It was as if he were saying: ‘You mean you cannot do what you want?’ Next, he told a blatant lie: “You certainly will not die.” Then he tried to convince Eve that she need not listen to God, saying: “God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened.” Satan implied that Jehovah did not want them to eat the fruit because doing so would enlighten them. Further, Satan made this false promise: “You will be like God, knowing good and bad.”

(Genesis 3:6) Consequently, the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was something desirable to the eyes, yes, the tree was pleasing to look at. So she began taking of its fruit and eating it. Afterward, she also gave some to her husband when he was with her, and he began eating it.

w00 11/15 25-26

We Can Learn From the First Human Couple

Was Eve's sin inevitable? By no means! Put yourself in her place. The serpent's claim completely distorted what God and Adam had said. How would you feel if a stranger charged someone you love and trust with dishonesty? Eve should have reacted differently, showing disgust and indignation, even refusing to listen. After all, who was the serpent to question God's righteousness and her husband's word? Out of respect for the principle of headship, Eve should

have sought advice before making any decision. So should we if we are ever presented with information contrary to God-given instructions. Yet, Eve trusted the Tempter's words, desiring to be her own judge of what was good and what was bad. The more she toyed with the idea, the more it appealed to her. What an error she made by entertaining a wrong desire, instead of dismissing it from her mind or discussing matters with her family head!—1 Corinthians 11:3; James 1:14, 15.

Adam Listens to His Wife's Voice

Eve soon induced Adam to join her in sin. How are we to explain his limp acquiescence? (Genesis 3:6, 17) Adam faced a conflict of loyalties. Would he obey his Creator, who had given him everything, including his beloved mate, Eve? Would Adam seek God's direction on what he was to do now? Or would the man throw in his lot with his wife? Adam knew very well that what she hoped to gain by eating the forbidden fruit was illusory. The apostle Paul was inspired to write: “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was thoroughly deceived and came to be in transgression.” (1 Timothy 2:14) So Adam deliberately chose to defy Jehovah. His fear of being separated from his wife was evidently greater than his faith in God's ability to remedy the situation.

(Genesis 3:15-19) And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel.” ¹⁶ To the woman he said: “I will greatly increase the pain of your pregnancy; in pain you will give birth to children, and your longing will be for your husband, and he will dominate you.” ¹⁷ And to Adam he said: “Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree concerning which I gave you this command, ‘You must not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground on your account. In pain you will

eat its produce all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, and you must eat the vegetation of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return.”

w12 9/1 4 ¶2

Does God Really Care About Women?

Have women been cursed by God?

No. Instead, it is “the original serpent, the one called Devil,” who has been “cursed” by God. (Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3:14) When God said that Adam would “dominate” his wife, God was not indicating his approval of the subjugation of woman by man. (Genesis 3:16) He was simply foretelling the sad consequences of sin on the first couple.

w04 1/1 29 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Genesis—I

3:17—In what way was the ground cursed, and for how long? The curse pronounced on the ground meant that cultivating it would now become very difficult. The effects of the cursed ground, with its thorns and thistles, were so keenly felt by Adam’s descendants that Noah’s father, Lamech, spoke of “the pain of our hands resulting from the ground which Jehovah has cursed.” (Genesis 5:29) After the Flood, Jehovah blessed Noah and his sons, stating His purpose that they fill the earth. (Genesis 9:1) God’s curse on the ground was apparently lifted.—Genesis 13:10.

it-2 186

Labor Pains

The tribulation associated with giving birth. God expressed to the first woman, Eve, after she had sinned, what the result would be as to childbearing. If she had remained obedient, God’s blessing would have continued upon her and childbearing would have been an unmixed

joy, for, “the blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it.” (Pr 10:22) But now, as a general rule, the imperfect functioning of the body would bring pain. Accordingly, God said (as often the things that he *permits* are said to be *done* by him): “I shall greatly increase the pain of your pregnancy; in birth pangs you will bring forth children.”—Ge 3:16.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 4:23, 24) Then La’mech composed these words for his wives A’dah and Zil’lah: “Hear my voice, you wives of La’mech; Give ear to my saying: A man I have killed for wounding me, Yes, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If 7 times Cain is to be avenged, Then La’mech 77 times.”

it-2 192 ¶5

Lamech

The poem that Lamech composed for his wives (Ge 4:23, 24) reflects the violent spirit of that day. Lamech’s poem ran: “Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; give ear to my saying: A man I have killed for wounding me, yes, a young man for giving me a blow. If seven times Cain is to be avenged, then Lamech seventy times and seven.” Evidently Lamech was presenting a case of self-defense, pleading that his act was not one of deliberate murder, like that of Cain. Lamech claimed that, in defending himself, he had killed the man who struck and wounded him. Therefore, his poem stood as a plea for immunity against anyone desiring to get revenge against him for killing his attacker.

(Genesis 4:26) There was also born to Seth a son, and he named him E’nosh. At that time people began calling on the name of Jehovah.

it-1 338 ¶2

Blasphemy

The “calling on the name of Jehovah” that started in the time of Enosh during the pre-Flood

period must not have been of an upright and proper nature, for Abel long before that had undoubtedly been directing himself to God by the divine name. (Ge 4:26; Heb 11:4) If, as some scholars hold, this calling on God's name was in the sense of misusing it and improperly applying Jehovah's name to humans or to idolatrous objects, then this would constitute a blasphemous act.—See ENOSH, ENOS.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 4:17–5:8) Afterward Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to E'noch. Then he engaged in building a city and named the city after his son E'noch. ¹⁸ Later I'rad was born to E'noch. And I'rad became father to Me-hu'ja-el, and Me-hu'ja-el became father to Me-thu'sha-el, and Me-thu'sha-el became father to La'mech. ¹⁹ La'mech took two wives for himself. The name of the first was A'dah, and the name of the second was Zil'lah. ²⁰ A'dah gave birth to Ja'bal. He was the founder of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was Ju'bal. He was the founder of all those who play the harp and the pipe. ²² Also, Zil'lah gave birth to Tu'bal-cain, who forged every sort of tool of copper and iron. And the sister of Tu'bal-cain was Na'a-mah. ²³ Then La'mech composed these words for his wives A'dah and Zil'lah: "Hear my voice, you wives of La'mech; Give ear to my saying: A man I have killed for wounding me, Yes, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If 7 times Cain is to be avenged, Then La'mech 77 times." ²⁵ Adam again had sexual relations with his wife, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Seth because, as she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring in place of Abel, because Cain killed him." ²⁶ There was also born to Seth a son, and he named him E'nosh. At that time people began calling on the name of Jehovah.

5 This is the book of Adam's history. In the day that God created Adam, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them. On the day they were created, he blessed them and named them Man. ³ Adam lived for 130 years and then became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and he named him Seth. ⁴ After becoming father to Seth, Adam lived for 800 years. And he became father to sons and daughters. ⁵ So all the days of Adam's life amounted to 930 years, and then he died. ⁶ Seth lived for 105 years and then became father to E'nosh. ⁷ After becoming father to E'nosh, Seth lived for 807 years. And he became father to sons and daughters. ⁸ So all the days of Seth amounted to 912 years, and then he died.

JANUARY 20-26

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 6-8

"He Did Just So"

(Genesis 6:9) This is the history of Noah. Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God.

(Genesis 6:13) After that God said to Noah: "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, because the earth is full of violence on account of them, so I am bringing them to ruin together with the earth.

w18.02 4 ¶4

Imitate the Faith and Obedience of Noah, Daniel, and Job

4 Challenges that Noah faced. By the time of Noah's great-grandfather Enoch, people had become very ungodly. They were even saying "shocking things" against Jehovah. (Jude 14, 15) Violence was increasing. In fact, in Noah's day, "the earth was filled with violence." Wicked

angels materialized as humans, took wives, and produced brutal, hybrid offspring. (Gen. 6:2-4, 11, 12) But Noah stood out as different. “Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. . . . He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God.”—Gen. 6: 8, 9.

(Genesis 6:14-16) Make for yourself an ark from resinous wood. You will make compartments in the ark and cover it with tar inside and outside. ¹⁵ This is how you will make it: The ark should be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. ¹⁶ You will make a window for light for the ark, one cubit from the top. You should put the entrance of the ark in its side and make it with a lower deck, a second deck, and a third deck.

w13 4/1 14 ¶1

He “Walked With the True God”

The work took decades, perhaps 40 to 50 years. There were trees to fell, logs to haul, and beams to hew, shape, and join. The ark was to have three stories, or decks, a number of compartments, and a door in the side. Evidently, there were windows along the top, as well as a roof that likely peaked in the middle with a slight pitch so that water would run off.—Genesis 6: 14-16.

(Genesis 6:22) And Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so.

w11 9/15 18 ¶13

Run the Race With Endurance

¹³ What enabled these servants of Jehovah to endure and succeed in the race? Note what Paul wrote about Noah. **(Read Hebrews 11:7.)** “The deluge of waters upon the earth [that would] bring to ruin all flesh” was something that Noah had “not yet beheld.” (Gen. 6:17) It was something that had never taken place before, something totally unprecedented. Still, Noah did not dismiss it as impossible or even improbable.

Why? Because he had faith that whatever Jehovah said, Jehovah would do. Noah did not feel that what he was asked to do was too difficult. Rather, “he did just so.” (Gen. 6:22) Considering all that Noah had to do—building the ark, gathering the animals, stocking the ark with food for humans and animals, preaching a warning message, and keeping his family spiritually strong—it was no small task to do “just so.” Yet, Noah’s faith and endurance resulted in life and blessings for him and for his family.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 7:2) You must take with you every kind of clean animal by sevens, the male and its mate; and of every animal that is not clean just two, the male and its mate;

w04 1/1 29 ¶7

Highlights From the Book of Genesis—I

7:2—What was used as a basis for making a distinction between clean and unclean animals? The basis of distinction evidently pertained to the use of sacrifices in worship and not to what could and could not be eaten. Animal flesh was not a part of man’s diet prior to the Flood. The designations “clean” and “unclean” for food came into existence only with the Mosaic Law, and they ended when it was abolished. (Acts 10:9-16; Ephesians 2:15) Apparently, Noah knew what was suitable for sacrifice in the worship of Jehovah. As soon as he left the ark, he “began to build an altar to Jehovah and to take some of all the clean beasts and of all the clean flying creatures and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar.”—Genesis 8:20.

(Genesis 7:11) In the 600th year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the 17th day of the month, on that day all the springs of the vast watery deep burst open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

Highlights From the Book of Genesis—1

7:11—Where did the water causing the global Flood come from? During the second creative period, or “day,” when the earth’s atmospheric “expanse” was formed, there were waters “beneath the expanse” and waters “above the expanse.” (Genesis 1:6, 7) The waters “beneath” were those already on earth. The waters “above” were huge quantities of moisture suspended high above the earth, forming a “vast watery deep.” These waters fell upon the earth in Noah’s day.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 6:1-16) Now when men started to grow in number on the surface of the ground and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of the true God began to notice that the daughters of men were beautiful. So they began taking as wives all whom they chose. ³ Then Jehovah said: “My spirit will not tolerate man indefinitely, because he is only flesh. Accordingly, his days will amount to 120 years.” ⁴ The Neph’i-lim were on the earth in those days and afterward. During that time the sons of the true God continued to have relations with the daughters of men, and these bore sons to them. They were the mighty ones of old times, the men of fame. ⁵ Consequently, Jehovah saw that man’s wickedness was great on the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. ⁶ Jehovah regretted that he had made men on the earth, and his heart was saddened. ⁷ So Jehovah said: “I am going to wipe men whom I have created off the surface of the ground, man together with domestic animals, creeping animals, and flying creatures of the heavens, for I regret that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. ⁹ This is the history of

Noah. Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God. ¹⁰ In time Noah became father to three sons, Shem, Ham, and Ja’pheth. ¹¹ But the earth had become ruined in the sight of the true God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² Yes, God looked upon the earth, and it was ruined; all flesh had ruined its way on the earth. ¹³ After that God said to Noah: “I have decided to put an end to all flesh, because the earth is full of violence on account of them, so I am bringing them to ruin together with the earth. ¹⁴ Make for yourself an ark from resinous wood. You will make compartments in the ark and cover it with tar inside and outside. ¹⁵ This is how you will make it: The ark should be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. ¹⁶ You will make a window for light for the ark, one cubit from the top. You should put the entrance of the ark in its side and make it with a lower deck, a second deck, and a third deck.

JANUARY 27–FEBRUARY 2

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | GENESIS 9-11

“All the Earth Continued to Be of One Language”

(Genesis 11:1-4) Now all the earth continued to be of one language and of one set of words. ² As they traveled eastward, they discovered a valley plain in the land of Shi’-nar, and they began dwelling there. ³ Then they said to one another: “Come! Let us make bricks and bake them with fire.” So they used bricks instead of stone, and bitumen as mortar. ⁴ They now said: “Come! Let us build a city for ourselves and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves, so that we will

not be scattered over the entire face of the earth.”

it-1 239

Babylon the Great

Characteristics of Ancient Babylon. The founding of the city of Babylon on the Plains of Shinar was concurrent with the attempt at building the Tower of Babel. (Ge 11:2-9) The popular cause to be advanced by the tower and city construction was, not the exaltation of God’s name, but that the builders might “make a celebrated name” for themselves. The ziggurat towers uncovered not only in the ruins of ancient Babylon but elsewhere in Mesopotamia would seem to confirm the essentially religious nature of the original tower, whatever its form or style. The decisive action taken by Jehovah God to overthrow the temple construction clearly condemns it as of a false religious origin. Whereas the Hebrew name given the city, Babel, means “Confusion,” the Sumerian name (*Ka-dingir-ra*) and the Akkadian name (*Bab-ilu*) both mean “Gate of God.” Thus the remaining inhabitants of the city altered the form of its name to avoid the original condemnatory sense, but the new or substitute form still identified the city with religion.

it-2 202 ¶2

Language

The Genesis account describes the uniting of some part of the post-Flood human family in a project that opposed God’s will as stated to Noah and his sons. (Ge 9:1) Instead of spreading out and ‘filling the earth,’ they determined to centralize human society, concentrating their residence on a site in what became known as the Plains of Shinar in Mesopotamia. Evidently this was also to become a religious center, with a religious tower.—Ge 11:2-4.

(Genesis 11:6-8) Jehovah then said: “Look! They are one people with one language, and

this is what they have started to do. Now there is nothing that they may have in mind to do that will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come! Let us go down there and confuse their language in order that they may not understand one another’s language.” ⁸ So Jehovah scattered them from there over the entire face of the earth, and they gradually left off building the city.

it-2 202 ¶3

Language

Almighty God gave their presumptuous project a setback by breaking up their unity of action, accomplishing this by confusing their common language. This made impossible any coordinated work on their project and led to their scattering to all parts of the globe. The confusion of their language would also hinder or slow down future progress in a wrong direction, a God-defying direction, since it would limit mankind’s ability to combine its intellectual and physical powers in ambitious schemes and also make it difficult to draw upon the accumulated knowledge of the different language groups formed—knowledge, not from God, but gained through human experience and research. (Compare Ec 7:29; De 32:5.) So, while it introduced a major divisive factor into human society, the confusion of human speech actually benefited human society in retarding the attainment of dangerous and hurtful goals. (Ge 11:5-9; compare Isa 8:9, 10.) One has only to consider certain developments in our own times, resulting from accumulated secular knowledge and man’s misuse thereof, to realize what God foresaw long ago would develop if the effort at Babel were allowed to go unhindered.

(Genesis 11:9) That is why it was named Ba’bel, because there Jehovah confused the language of all the earth, and Jehovah scattered them from there over the entire face of the earth.

Nations

Separated now by communication barriers, each linguistic group developed its own culture, art, customs, traits, and religion—each its own ways of doing things. (Le 18:3) Alienated from God, the various peoples contrived many idols of their mythical deities.—De 12:30; 2Ki 17:29, 33.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 9:20-22) Now Noah started off as a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank of the wine, he became intoxicated, and he uncovered himself inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Ca'naan, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers outside.

(Genesis 9:24, 25) When Noah woke up from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said: "Cursed be Ca'naan. Let him become the lowest slave to his brothers."

it-1 1023 ¶4

Ham

It is possible that Canaan himself had been involved directly in the incident and that his father Ham had failed to correct him. Or Noah, speaking prophetically by inspiration, foresaw that the bad tendency in Ham, perhaps already manifest in his son Canaan, would be inherited by Canaan's offspring. The curse was partly fulfilled when the Semitic Israelites subjugated the Canaanites. Those who were not destroyed (for example, the Gibeonites [Jos 9]) were made slaves to Israel. Centuries later, the curse was further fulfilled when descendants of Ham's son Canaan came under the domination of the Japhetic world powers of Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

(Genesis 10:9, 10) He became a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah. That is why

there is a saying: "Just like Nim'rod, a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Ba'bel, E'rech, Ac'cad, and Cal'neh, in the land of Shi'nar.

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Nimrod

The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom included the cities of Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, all in the land of Shinar. (Ge 10:10) Therefore it was likely under his direction that the building of Babel and its tower began. This conclusion is also in agreement with the traditional Jewish view. Wrote Josephus: "[Nimrod] little by little transformed the state of affairs into a tyranny, holding that the only way to detach men from the fear of God was by making them continuously dependent upon his own power. He threatened to have his revenge on God if He wished to inundate the earth again; for he would build a tower higher than the water could reach and avenge the destruction of their forefathers. The people were eager to follow this advice of [Nimrod], deeming it slavery to submit to God; so they set out to build the tower . . . and it rose with a speed beyond all expectation."—*Jewish Antiquities*, I, 114, 115 (iv, 2, 3).

Bible Reading

(Genesis 10:6-32) The sons of Ham were Cush, Miz'ra-im, Put, and Ca'naan. ⁷ The sons of Cush were Se'ba, Hav'i-lah, Sab'tah, Ra'a-mah, and Sab'te-ca. The sons of Ra'a-mah were She'ba and De'dan. ⁸ Cush became father to Nim'rod. He was the first to become a mighty one on the earth. ⁹ He became a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah. That is why there is a saying: "Just like Nim'rod, a mighty hunter in opposition to Jehovah." ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Ba'bel, E'rech, Ac'cad, and Cal'neh, in the land of Shi'nar. ¹¹ From that land he went into Assy'r'i-a and built Nin'e-veh, Re-ho'both-Ir,

Ca'lah, ¹² and Re'sen, between Nin'e-veh and Ca'lah: This is the great city. ¹³ Miz'ra-im became father to Lu'dim, An'a-mim, Le-ha'bim, Naph-tu'him, ¹⁴ Path-ru'sim, Cas-lu'him (from whom the Phi-lis'tines came), and Caph'to-rim. ¹⁵ Ca'naan became father to Si'don, his firstborn, and Heth, ¹⁶ as well as the Jeb'u-site, the Am'or-ite, the Gir'ga-shite, ¹⁷ the Hi'vite, the Ark'ite, the Si'nite, ¹⁸ the Ar'-vad-ite, the Zem'a-rite, and the Ha'math-ite. Afterward, the families of the Ca'naan-ites were scattered. ¹⁹ So the boundary of the Ca'naan-ites was from Si'don as far as Ge'-rar, near Gaz'a, as far as Sod'om, Go-mor'rah, Ad'mah, and Ze-boi'im, near La'sha. ²⁰ These were the sons of Ham according to their families and their languages, by their lands and their nations. ²¹ Children were also born to Shem, the forefather of all the sons of E'ber and the brother of Ja'pheth the oldest. ²² The sons of Shem were E'lam, As'shur, Ar-pach'-shad, Lud, and A'ram. ²³ The sons of A'ram were Uz, Hul, Ge'ther, and Mash. ²⁴ Ar-pach'-shad became father to She'lah, and She'lah became father to E'ber. ²⁵ Two sons were born to E'ber. The name of the one was Pe'leg, because in his lifetime the earth was divided. The name of his brother was Jok'tan. ²⁶ Jok'-tan became father to Al-mo'dad, She'leph, Ha-zar-ma'veth, Je'rah, ²⁷ Ha-do'ram, U'zal, Dik'lah, ²⁸ O'bal, A-bim'a-el, She'ba, ²⁹ O'phir, Hav'i-lah, and Jo'bab; all of these were the sons of Jok'tan. ³⁰ Their place of dwelling extended from Me'sha as far as Se'phar, the mountainous region of the East. ³¹ These were the sons of Shem according to their families and their languages, by their lands and their nations. ³² These were the families of the sons of Noah according to their family lines and by their nations. From these the nations were spread abroad in the earth after the Flood.