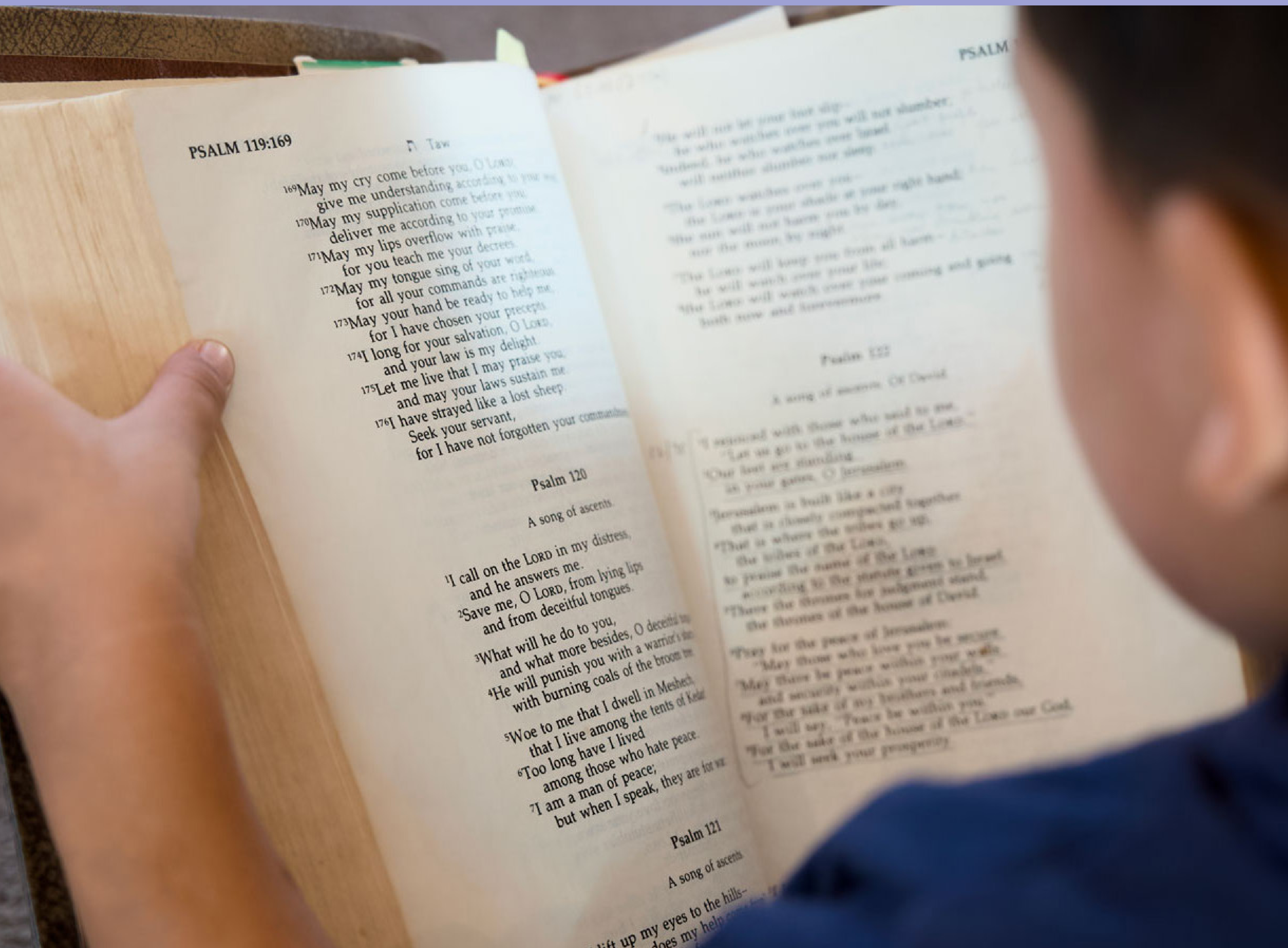




Into the Bible

The purpose of into the Bible
is to get children into the Bible,
and to get the Bible into children.

STEP ONE: GENESIS 1–3



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General Introduction



INTO THE BIBLE is a way to help children and young people, and anyone for that matter, to understand the Bible better. It's a simple translation from the original languages of the Bible, together with explanations, to make the Bible more clear.

Each Step INTO THE BIBLE is made up of three parts:

- 1) A **translation**, so that children can understand the passage in order to be able to read it in their own Bible.
- 2) An **introduction** to the passage for Beginners, so that they can get to know the background to the passage they are reading. This includes the history, geography, the issues of the time, and people involved, the culture, etc.
- 3) A **Bible study** on the passage for young people, or for parents, or teachers to help them grasp what the point of each paragraph is, and what are the issues spoken about in the text .

For five years in my ministry God put me in a government high school where I **discovered how interested children were in understanding a passage of the Scriptures**. Class after class, year after year there was sustained interest and even excitement. Among thousands of learners, I never had a class not interested.

During that time three of our four school-going children died. They died of extremely rare diseases that strike once in several million cases, and all three cases were entirely different from one another.

These two factors, teaching at the high school, and at the same time losing our children, are where the idea of INTO THE BIBLE came from.

The method of INTO THE BIBLE is to consult the Hebrew or Greek lexicons (dictionaries) to find out what meaning of the Hebrew/Greek word best fits the context of the passage, and will also make clear sense to a young reader. Where a word is difficult to understand I may turn it into a sentence to make sense of it. Where an issue is rather complicated, I use a footnote to explain it.

Hebrew and Greek lexicons open up the meanings of words and phrases in such a way that one sees more clearly what the Bible is saying. My aim is to share this information with children, with people who are beginning to read their Bibles, and with anyone who wants to teach children or adults, or those who simply want to get to know the Bible better.

The main principle on which INTO THE BIBLE is based is that the Bible comes from God, and it leads us to God, and that the whole Bible is true, and is perfectly reliable. The Bible is what we need to get through life, and to face death. The Bible has God's authority and goodness behind it.

Therefore, it is vital that everyone can understand their Bible.

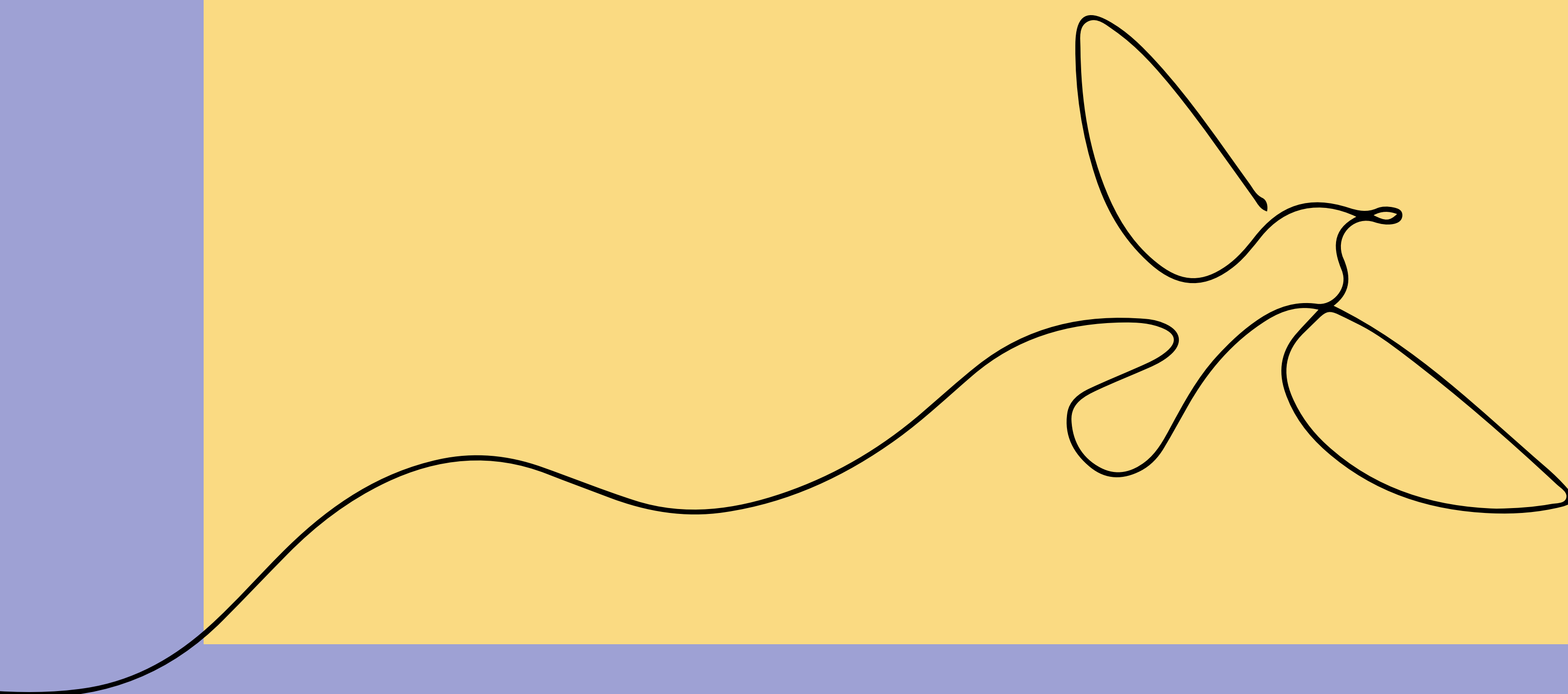
- INTO THE BIBLE is intended to prepare youngsters to be able to **read their own Bible.**
- INTO THE BIBLE is planned to **introduce children to most of the Bible.**
- INTO THE BIBLE is **educational.** It is meant to develop their **reading skills as well as their characters.** It can also be used by parents or teachers to teach their children. **The focus is on our children.**

Our children are our heritage from God, and the Bible is the heritage for our children, which is also from God. The purpose of Into the Bible is to get children into the Bible, and to get the Bible into children.

Yours in Christ,

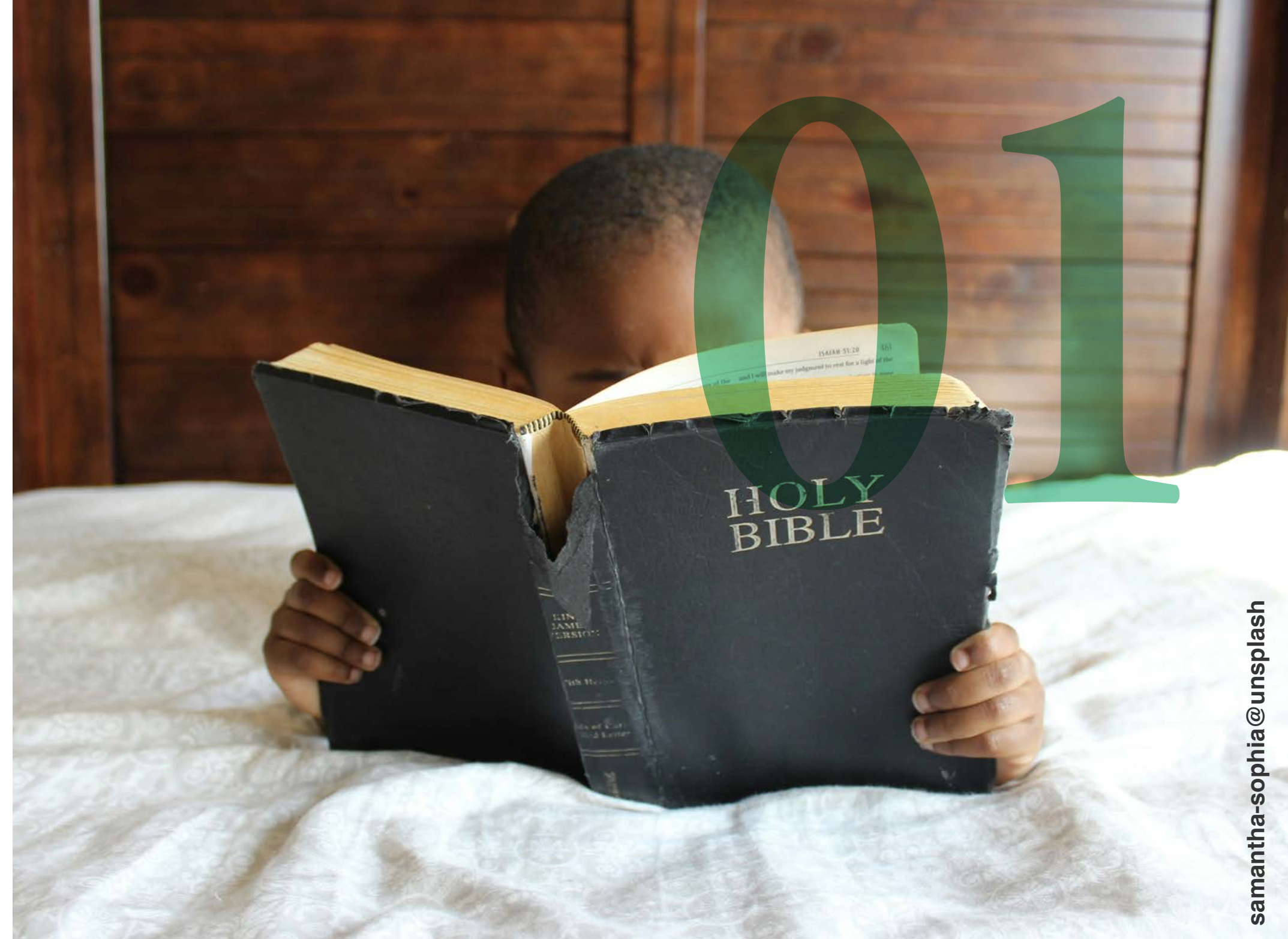
Peter Watson

Genesis 1–3



Genesis 1-3

A Simple Bible Translation



START HERE!

Read this simple translation to understand the passage, then read it in your own Bible.



1:1 GOD, AND THE BEGINNING

In the beginning God created everything: God alone created the skies and the earth.

1:2 THE STATE OF THE EARTH, AND GOD'S SPIRIT

At first the earth was a terrible mess. There was nothing good there. Nothing could possibly live there. The sea covered everything. It was deep and terribly wild. Above the surface of the sea was absolute darkness. The awesome sea and the awful darkness together made it utterly impossible for anything to live in the world.

But God's Spirit was there. The Spirit of God was in full and perfect control of all those masses of deep, dark, dangerous waters.

1:3-5 GOD CREATED LIGHT

God said: Let there be light! When God gave the order, there was light. God saw to it that the light was good. It was brilliant!

God separated the light from the darkness. He made light and darkness two completely different things. He called the light, "Day", and he called the darkness, "Night."

So there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.

1:6-8 GOD CREATED THE SKY

Then God said: Let there be a great space covered by a huge roof amongst all this water, and let it separate some of the water from the rest of the water.

So God made the huge space in the air. It separated the water under the space from the water above in the space. It all worked out just as God wanted it to. In that space would be air and rain. Air and water are two of the most precious things in the world.

God called the space, “Sky.” There was evening and there was morning, the second day.

1:9-10 GOD MADE DRY LAND

Then God said: Let the waters under the sky be collected together into one place, and let dry land rise up from under the seas.

So that is what happened. Dry land appeared out of all the water. God called the dry ground, “Land,” and he called all the waters that were gathered together, “Seas.” God then checked that it was good, and he was pleased with it. It was solid and firm.

1:11-13 GOD MADE PLANTS

Then God said: Let the land produce fields covered with grass, and plants that have seeds and trees that give fruit. Let the trees each have their own special kind of fruit, with their own seeds in the fruit. Let all of this grow on the land.

Everything happened just as God said. The land did produce grass. It produced plants that have seeds from which will grow the same kind of plant. It also produced trees that give fruit. That fruit would have its own kind of seeds that will produce the same kind of tree. God saw to it that it was good. It would produce all kinds of food. God was pleased with what he saw. It was satisfying! It was healthy and a pleasure! This was just what God wanted.

Then evening came, followed by the morning. That was the third day.

1:14-19 GOD MADE THE SUN, MOON AND STARS

God now said: Let there be lights in space, in the sky, to make the difference between day and night. They must also serve as signs and seasons, and as days and years.

Let them be as lights up there in the sky, and let them give light for the earth.

That is what then happened. It all turned out exactly as God had ordered. It was magnificent! God made two big lights up there in the sky. The bigger, stronger light was the sun. It was to control the day. The lesser, more gentle light was the moon. It was to brighten up the dark night sky. God also made the stars.

God put them in the sky to give light on earth.

He made them to rule over or govern the day and the night. They were to make a clear difference between light and darkness. God saw to it that this was well done. He was pleased with what he saw. It was awesome! It was also all so reliable and so good for the world.

Then evening came, followed by the morning. That was the fourth day.

1:20-23 GOD CREATED FISH AND BIRDS

Then God said: Let the water everywhere swarm with lots of life, with huge numbers of living creatures. Let birds also fly above the ground. Let them fly around freely, up in the sky.

So God created huge amounts of fish and sea creatures. He gave them life so that they could live and move around. He created great swarms of them in the water, millions and billions and trillions of them. On top of this each type of fish was a special kind. God also made all the birds that can fly. Each type of bird was also its own special kind. God saw to it that it was all good. God liked what he saw. God had now made life. Life is a marvellous thing! There were now lots of different kinds of living creatures on earth. It was all very fascinating!

God blessed all these living creatures. God said: Be useful. Produce your little ones. Grow and increase your numbers. Fill the waters of the seas with life. Let the numbers of the different sorts of birds in the world also increase.

Then it was evening, and morning, the fifth day.

1:24-25 GOD MADE ANIMALS

Then God said: Let the land produce animals, living creatures, each one of a certain kind. Let the land support animals for farming, and animals that can move around in nature and live off the land. All these animals are to be of special types or species. That is what then happened.

God made different kinds of animals that live on the land. He made all sorts of different species of animals that can move around in the countryside. God saw to it that it was well done. God approved of what he had made. It was good. It was excellent and marvellous. Animals are so interesting, and all of them are very well made. We also like animals, just as God does.

1:26-28 GOD CREATED MAN

Then God said: Let us make man. Let us make man in our own image. We shall make him like God, so that he is able to rule and to be the leader of all that we have made. Let him rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air. Let him be in control of the animals, and take charge of the whole earth and all the creatures that move about on the land. We want man to care for them and look after them.

So God created man. He created man like himself, someone who is capable and caring. He created him as a reflection of God. God created both man and woman.

God blessed them. He wanted them to live good, useful and happy lives. God said to them: Increase in number, and fill the world. You two must be in charge of the earth. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, and over all the living animals that move around on land. The best thing that God created was the last thing he made. It was man and woman, and from them, boys and girls.

1:29-31 GOD SUPPLIED FOOD

Then God said to man: I have given you all plants that produce seeds everywhere on earth, and all the trees that have fruit and produce seeds. All this will be good food for you.

It will also be food for every living creature on earth, and for every bird in the sky, and for every creature moving around on the land. This food is for every single living thing. All these plants will be food for all of you. And that is how it was and will always be. All living creatures must have food. We cannot live or be healthy without it. We need it to be strong and able to do things.

God was very pleased with all that he had made. It was very, very good. It was excellent! It was such a wonderful blessing, especially for man! Then there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

CHAPTER 2

2:1-3 GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY

So the universe and the whole earth were finished, as well as the great and wonderful things in them.

By the seventh day God had finished his work. So he rested on the seventh day from the work he had done.

Therefore God blessed the seventh day by making it a special and different day. He made it holy. He blessed it because on that day he rested from all his great work of creation that he had done.

2:4-9 GOD PLANTED A GARDEN

Now this is what happened next when the skies and the earth were created, at the time the Lord God made the earth and the sky.

To begin with, not all the plants of the field were growing yet. Nor had the crops of the field started growing. This was for two reasons: First, because the Lord God had not made it rain on the land, and secondly, because there was no man to farm the land.

Then an underground stream came up out of the ground. It produced a useful wet mist that watered all the land around it. That solved the first problem.

To solve the second problem, the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the soil, and breathed life into him through his nose. So the man became a living being or person. Life means that we are always breathing. (We normally breathe through our nose.)

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden to start with, and that is where he put the man whom he had formed.

There God made things grow out of the ground. He grew good looking trees and tasty fruit trees. Right in the middle of the garden was a different sort of tree. It was a fruit tree that held the secret to the knowledge of good and bad, what is right and what is wrong. That tree was about knowing what is true, but also what is false or a lie.

2:10-14 THE RIVERS OF EDEN

A river was flowing from Eden. It was to water the garden. From there it divided into four and became the sources of great or major rivers.

The first river curved its way through a land where there was gold.

The gold of that land was of a high quality. There were other good things there, like perfume and precious stones.

The second river curved or wound its way through a country that was then called Cush.

The name of the third river was the Tigris. It runs past the front, or east, of Asshur [a-shoor]. Asshur is better known as the powerful country of Assyria. Today Assyria is known as Syria. The fourth river is the Euphrates [yoo-fray-tees].

2:15-17 GOD PUT MAN IN EDEN

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to farm it and look after it.

The Lord God gave an order to the man. He told him: You are completely free to eat from every tree in the garden.

But, you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. You must keep your conscience clean. As soon as you eat from that fruit you will have to die.

2:18-24 GOD MADE WOMAN FOR MAN

Then the Lord God took a decision. He said: It is not good enough that the man is all alone. I will make a helper for him that will be like him, and that he will like.

So first of all the Lord God made, from the soil, every living animal that is out in the fields, as well as every bird in the skies. The Lord God brought these to the man to see how he would like them and what he would name each one. This meant that all these creatures would get their names from man.

So the man gave names to all the animals and to the birds that fly, and to all the animals that live out in the fields. Yet, despite getting to know all these living creatures, the man could not find a real partner that was good enough or suitable for him.

So the Lord God put the man into a very deep sleep. Then while he was unconscious God took one of his ribs out and closed up his chest where the rib had been.

The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman. So woman was made from man, not just from soil. This helps explain why women are more beautiful, and girls are so lovely, not just in looks but in nature too. God then brought the woman to the man.

The man, Adam, was pleased. He was delighted and grateful. He celebrated by saying: **At last! She's bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.** Because of this I've decided that she is to be called "woman" [wo-man] since she was taken out of a man's body. In Hebrew a man is "ish" and a woman is "ishah" [ish-ah].

This explains why a grown man normally leaves the home of his father and his mother, and links up with his wife to become a couple. Together they can make their own home and start their own family. That is what our parents did, and that is what most children are going to do when they grow up.

2:25 HOW ADAM AND EVE BEGAN LIFE

To begin with, Adam and Eve, a man and a woman, were bare all the time. The man and his wife, who were made differently, lived together and they wore no clothes. They did not need them as they were perfectly comfortable. So they were not in any way worried about the fact that they were naked. For them that was the normal way to live. They were completely innocent, like little children. They lived naturally, without clothes, just as all the animals did.

CHAPTER 3

3.1-3 THE SNAKE ASKS EVE A QUESTION

From among all the animals in the countryside that the Lord God had made, the snake was the clever one. So it asked the woman: Is it true that God said that you can't eat the fruit from all the trees in this garden? Did God really say that you are not allowed to have whatever you want?

So the woman said to the snake: O no! God said that it's alright for us to eat from all the fruit of any of the trees in the garden. We can eat anything we like.

But there is just one tree right in the middle of the garden, and God warned us not to eat its fruit. He told us: You must not touch it at all, or else you will die. Don't have anything to do with it!

3.4-7 THE SNAKE TEMPTS THE WOMAN

The snake said to the woman: I promise you that you will not be put to death. God did not mean that. You two will not lose your lives.

For God realises that when you eat from this tree you will find out that you are free. You will be just like God. You will be free to decide for yourselves what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. The two of you will then be able to do what you feel like doing, and you will be free to decide what you don't want to do. God was just trying to put you off by scaring you.

So the woman then thought that the fruit of that tree would be good to eat as food. It also looked very nice. But the big thing was that if they ate that fruit they would become wise. They would be clever and smart, like God. **So she took some of its fruit and ate it.** She also gave it to her husband who was with her. **And he ate it too.**

But then they discovered something that they had not noticed before. They realised that they were naked. They suddenly felt embarrassed because their bodies were so different.

So they got hold of some large fig leaves and made for themselves something to wear.

3.8-13 BOTH OF THEM HAVE TO ANSWER TO GOD

Then they heard the voice of The Lord God call them. He was visiting them in the garden at the time when the breeze blows. But instead of welcoming the Lord God, the man and his wife ran away. They tried to hide from God among the bushes in the garden.

But the Lord God demanded to see the man. He called out to him: Where are you?

The man had to answer: I heard you call in the garden, but I could not bring myself to face up to you. I felt so bad because I was naked. So I ran away and hid myself.

The Lord God asked him: Who showed you that you were naked? Who explained that to you? Did you disobey me? Did you eat from the tree that I told you clearly NOT to eat?

The man answered: The woman you kindly gave me to be with me as my wife and helper and friend - she produced the fruit from the tree and offered it to me. I never thought that anything harmful would come from her, so I ate it. **So yes, I did eat it!**

Then the Lord God spoke to the woman: What is this about? What have you done? The woman answered: I'm afraid the snake tricked me, and I was completely taken in by it. That's why I ate it. I know I should never have allowed myself to listen to him. **But yes, I did eat it!**

3.14-15 GOD PUNISHES THE DEVIL

Then the Lord God told the snake: Because you have caused this trouble you will be punished. I am angry with you. You are going to get into big trouble. You will be hated more than any other animal. From now on you will be reduced to crawling around on your belly. No one will want you. You will bite the dust, and spend your life lonely and silent. You will suffer for what you have done. You are cursed.

The Lord God said to the snake: I shall bring war between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He is going to hurt you, and you are going to hurt him. He will destroy your pride and arrogance. He will take away your power to do harm to people, and your influence to cause them trouble. He is going to remove your dreadful leadership among people. As it says in Hebrew: **"He will hurt your head."** But you are going to attack him using dirty tricks. You are going to fight him with lies and excuses and cheating. You will tackle him by means of bullying and mocking and insulting his people. As it says in Hebrew: **"You will hurt his heel."**

3.16-20 GOD PUNISHES EVE AND ADAM

To the woman God said: I have taken the decision to make it difficult and painful for you to have children. Yet you will still want your husband to give you children. He will have to look after you and be your leader.

To Adam God said: Because you listened to what your wife had to say, and gave in to her, and ate from the tree that I ordered you not to, you will be punished. It is going to be painful and a strain for you to grow food from the ground. To have enough to eat, you are going to have to work hard for the whole of your life.

The ground will make plenty of difficulties for you by producing prickly thorns and lots of weeds. But you are going to need to eat the crops of the fields.

In order to get food to eat you are going to have to work hard. You will work until you sweat. You will have to go on doing this until you die. When you die you will return to the ground because you were originally taken from the ground. You were made of dust, and you will go back to the dust.

So the man took responsibility for his wife and named her Eve. He called her that because she was the mother of all human beings. Her Hebrew name is Chavvah, which means “Life” [chav-vah, ch as in loch]. She is the mother of all people who have life. We translate Chavvah into English, as Eve.

3.21-24 GOD EXPELS MAN FROM THE GARDEN

Then the Lord God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife to wear.

The Lord God said: What has now happened is that man has become like one of us. He has learnt to know what is good as well as what is bad. Since he has discovered this it is important that he does not help himself to the fruit from the Tree of Life. If he eats that then he shall live forever.

So the Lord God ordered man to leave the Garden of Eden. He had to go and work with the soil from which he had originally been taken.

In that way God expelled the man. He then put a special guard from heaven outside the garden, with a shiny and threatening sword. This dangerous weapon was used to patrol the whole area in order to protect the way to the Tree of Life.

NOW YOU CAN READ GENESIS CHAPTERS 1-3 IN YOUR OWN BIBLE.

Genesis 1

Passage background & introduction



Read this part to get to know the background of the chapters you read in section 01. Interesting things like how the world began, what God did to create our world, how mankind, man and woman, came into being, and how he struggled with the first responsibility that God gave him. It even explains why we have to die, and how it was possible that we could live forever.



The book of **GENESIS** is the first book in the whole Bible. Genesis is a Greek word that means **THE BEGINNING** of everything.

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 tell us about God's creation. Creation is good and beautiful and wonderful! So nature shows us very clearly how very good and glorious, and how brilliant and marvellous, God is, because he created all these lovely and amazing things. We can learn a lot about God from his creation.

Chapters 1 and 2 show us what God wanted life to be like for us. God made everything so good because he wants life to be very good for us. Then the rest of the Bible shows us what God's plans for us were when he created our world and us. We learn a lot about life from God's creation and especially from the Bible. In fact, we learn more about creation by reading the Bible than by nature studies or scientific studies about the world and space. People who study nature and outer space seem to learn nothing about God unless they also read the Bible. Since God made everything, we ought to learn something useful about God by studying such things as geography, biology and science. Yet when people ignore the Bible they cannot see the connection between creation and its Creator. The Bible helps us to do that.

Genesis chapter 3 is about what went wrong with the world at the beginning. This tells us why there is so much trouble and suffering in the world. It explains to us how death began. Death came only after the creation.

The purpose of the first two chapters of the Bible is:

- To show us why we should have such a deep respect for God
- To show us why God made us
- To help us to understand the rest of the Bible better.

The purpose of chapter 3 is to warn us not to disobey God and not to sin against him.

The Bible tells us that there is a God. We live with many people who think that there is no God. Either they don't want to believe, or they don't know what to believe. There are also lots of people who believe in other ideas that people made up long ago. When most people don't believe in God it sometimes makes it hard for us to believe in him. Then when people give up believing in God because things go wrong in their lives, it can hurt us deeply.

The word "Bible" means "The Truth," that is, the truth about God.

The Bible is what we need to help us to believe properly in God. Nature gives us a rough idea about God, but the Bible makes it possible to understand God clearly and properly.

As we read the Bible we learn what God is like. He is good. He is great! He made everything. He made us all. He looks after us. And he loves us very much!

God knows what is right and what is wrong. He knows what is best, and what is bad. What is wrong or bad is bad for us. But God is always good for us, even when things go wrong and we suffer.

We did not make ourselves. Nor did we invent God. No, he made us, and he is there, and he is real. We have to learn how to understand him and how to get on with him.

The way to get to know God is to read the Bible. God got some special people to know him and then told them what to write. There is no other book in the world that is like the Bible.

The Bible comes from God

The reason why God made us was to do something for him. He wanted us to look after the things that he has made. He wants us to do good work. He wants us to be like him. If we are going to do the work God wants us to do, then the most important thing that

we need to do is to listen to him. We must learn to love him and trust him. We must believe him and obey him.

To live a proper life we need to understand two very important things:

The first is that:

God is excellent and wonderful!

That's what Genesis 1 and 2 are about. The second point is that we are not great or good. That's what Genesis 3 is about. The whole of mankind has gone wrong.

We have all done what we should NOT have done.

All of us have also failed to do what we should have done.

Mankind has made a mess of life. That's why there is so much fighting and crime and suffering. That's why there's so much trouble and pain and unhappiness. All of this failure is because we have not listened to God.

But God has not let us down. He made us and he loves us. So he is patient with us. He had a plan to help us, and to get us right again. He has saved us from being ruined. He has given us hope. He has told us this in the Bible.

What we must do is trust him and listen to him. We must read the Bible to find out what God is truly like. We must learn what God has said and what he wants. That is the way for us to get right with God our Maker.

We cannot understand God without the Bible because he is so amazing. We cannot understand life without the Bible. Life is too complicated. We cannot properly understand other people without the help of the Bible, because all people are so different from one another. We cannot even understand ourselves without the Bible. We make too many mistakes.

That's why there's so much trouble and pain and unhappiness. All of this failure is because we have not listened to God.

We all have a soul as well as a body and a mind.

We need to learn the truth about ourselves. We have to learn that from God. God uses the Bible to teach us about him and about life and about ourselves and others. God gave us the Bible for the good of our soul and our mind, and even for the good of our body.

Our soul is that part of us that needs to believe.

Our mind is that part of us that needs to think.

Our body is that part of us that needs to live.

The Bible tells us the TRUTH.

The Bible shows us what is RIGHT.

The Bible brings us HOPE.

The Bible comes from GOD.

The Bible makes it possible for us to find out the truth, to come right in life, and to live well. The Bible makes it possible for us to die, at any time, with the hope of a better life.

The Bible begins, in chapter 1, by showing us how wonderfully God made everything, including us. Once we appreciate that, we can trust him and listen to him. The better we can understand what God has made, the more we can respect him and have confidence in him. God has given us all this goodness in creation so that we can know that he is real and good. We must therefore learn what we can about the world around us so that our appreciation for God can improve, and so that our admiration for God can grow.

The Bible begins, in chapter 2, by telling us what God wants us to do. He wants us to look after his creation well. He wants us to enjoy all these things he created and made. God made things good so that we can have a good life. An important part of living a good life is to be useful. God has given us responsibilities and challenges so that we may learn how to become useful in this wonderful world God has made for us. The more we learn, and the more useful we become, the more we are going to enjoy this world and this life that God has given us.

The Bible begins, in chapter 3, by explaining to us that we must be careful to listen to God and do what he says. We cannot afford to ignore him or disobey him. Adam and Eve failed to listen to God. The result is that a lot has gone wrong in the world, and a lot also goes wrong in our lives, for the same reason: we fail to listen to God. God meant Adam and Eve to be a big and very important lesson for all of us. Adam and Eve have affected all the people on earth. Therefore everyone, everywhere, has to learn from God, and from Adam and Eve, how to avoid the same mistake that our first parents made.

We learn five things from what happened in the Garden of Eden.

1. God made Eden a beautiful and pleasant world.
2. God told Adam and Eve what they should do, and how to enjoy life.
3. God warned Adam and Eve what NOT to do, and why they must not do it.
4. God punished them, as he had warned them he would if they disobeyed him.
5. God also helped them when they failed. He gave them HOPE.

So this is what the whole Bible is about. In the Bible we learn how to live, and how to enjoy life, and how to do something worthwhile and good in life. These are the parts of the Bible that people like to read.

But the Bible also tells us what we must not do, and why we must listen to God. These are the parts of the Bible that many people want to change, or just avoid reading and thinking about. There are some parts of the Bible that people do not like.

But it is a huge mistake to argue with what God has told us.

The Bible tells us that God allowed us to sin so that he could make us even better people than he created us to be.

God allowed us to sin in order to save us forever from sin.

Genesis 1

A Bible study on our passage



Now let's grasp the points of each paragraph and the issues being spoken about and together we can grow in our knowledge and love of God.



1:1 GOD, AND THE BEGINNING

¹In the beginning God created everything: God alone created ²the skies and the earth.

¹In the beginning: We don't know when the beginning was. All we know is that there was a beginning to life on earth. There is so much that we do not know about the past. Experts are finding out more and more, but there will always be lots that we don't know.

When we don't really know about something, many people like to guess. But if we guess it is very easy to be wrong. The one thing that we do know is that the Bible is true and reliable when it talks about the past. This is because God gave us the Bible. The word "Bible" means the Book of Truth, "The Book of God" that we can believe and rely on.

"In-the-beginning" is just one word in Hebrew. It is the first word of the whole Bible. It has an important meaning that comes out more and more clearly in the rest of the Bible. "In-the-beginning God created" means two things:

First, it means that we, and everything else in the world, had a beginning. All of creation, all of life, had a start. The world and life is not something

We and everything else in the world, had a beginning. All of creation, all of life, had a start.

permanent, it is not forever, it is not eternal. We also had a start, when we were born. Every year, on that day, our birthday, we remember that we had a beginning.

Secondly, in-the-beginning God created also means that God did NOT have a beginning. God was there before anything else began. God made everything in the beginning. So God never had a start. This is the most amazing and wonderful mystery there is in life.

No one can imagine how God never had a beginning. It is too much for us to understand. This, more than anything else, shows us how BIG God is and how small we are! It is easier to understand that God shall live forever, than it is to grasp that God never had a beginning. God made the beginning of everything!

All this tells us that God is always there. The word “GOD” means someone that we can always turn to. We can rely totally and absolutely on him, at all times, whatever happens.

the skies: Sometimes “the skies” are called the **heavens**. The heavens and the skies mean the same thing. But what the Bible calls “heaven” is somewhere beyond the skies and even beyond space. But somehow heaven is also not very far away from us. God is in heaven and yet he looks after us. We can even talk to him because he is always near us.

High up above us is where our better and permanent life is going to be.

The skies above us are always there to remind us of God who is always there, above us. As the skies are vast and unlimited in size, so is God. As the skies contain mysteries we cannot understand so is God full of mysteries we cannot understand. But just because we do not understand him does not mean that he is not there.

What the skies also tell us is that somewhere up there is where our final and eternal home is. High up above us is where our better and permanent life is going to be.

One day we shall be up there with God.

1: 2 THE STATE OF THE EARTH, AND GOD'S SPIRIT

At first the earth was a terrible mess. There was nothing good there. Nothing could possibly live there. The sea covered everything. It was deep and terribly wild. Above the surface of the sea was absolute darkness. The awesome sea and the awful darkness together made it utterly impossible for anything to live in the world.

But God's Spirit was there. The Spirit of God was in full and perfect control of all those ¹masses of deep, dark, dangerous waters.

¹**masses of deep, dark, dangerous waters:** Water can be very powerful and dangerous.

A stream that is flowing strongly after some rain is powerful. It can sweep a man off his feet if he gets in it just up to his knees.

The roughest seas are between Antarctica and Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. Waves there can reach up to well over 100 feet high (or over 30 metres.) That is as high as a ten storied building.

At Christmas time in 2004 an earthquake in the Indian Ocean caused a tsunami shock wave to travel as fast as a jet aeroplane towards Indonesia. When it reached the Northern Sumatra in Indonesia it built up into a wave that was up to 100 feet high. It drowned nearly a quarter of a million people.

The highest wave we know of was in a bay in Alaska where an earthquake caused a huge cliff to fall into the sea at the top of the bay. It triggered a wave well over 1500 feet high.

The waters at the beginning of the world would have been very rough and dangerous. On top of that everything was pitch-dark. What the Bible is saying is that the world began in terrible chaos. Nothing could possibly live in those conditions.

The first thing to notice was that God could live although the world was in a state of utter chaos. God could live because he is a spirit. This tells us how different God is from us. It's another reason why so many people cannot understand God. Because they cannot understand him they think they do not have to believe in him. But since he is there, we must believe in him. The fact that the world is now such a beautiful place is our evidence that God is there. If God created the world he must be at least just as real as our world.

The waters at the beginning of the world would have been very rough and dangerous.

1:3-5 GOD CREATED LIGHT

God said: Let there be light! When God gave the order, there was light. God saw to it that ¹the light was good. It was brilliant!

God separated the light from the darkness. He made light and darkness two completely different things. He called the light, “Day”, and he called the darkness, “Night.” So ²there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.

¹the light: Light is amazing! It is difficult to understand what light is. Light is a mystery. It's a miracle!

What we do know is that we cannot live without it. We also need light to be able to see how lovely so many things are that God has made.

Light travels incredibly fast, at over 180,000 miles in just one second! On top of that it does not hurt us when it gets to us at that speed! How did God create something that could travel at such a speed? At the same time it is so beautiful and useful. Light is indeed an utterly marvellous miracle!

Without light we would not be able to live. Light comes into our brain through our eyes. God created our eyes and brain as well as light. It is all so wonderful and absolutely brilliant!

The Bible will go on to tell us that the most important thing in our lives is light. It is light that enables us to see. When we can see we can understand. When we understand we can live properly. In the Bible light stands for truth. **Truth** is what we need most in order to be able to live good lives.

Truth comes from God. God has given us the Bible to tell us the truth. The Bible is our source of truth, or light. The source of all truth is God.

The most important teaching of the Bible is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the light of the world. He came to lead us out of the darkness that sin has caused in our lives. The trouble with all of us is that we cannot see truth clearly. We cannot see into the future. We don't understand why things go wrong as they often do. Jesus came to help us to see life and truth and the future more clearly. He came to get us to see what's right, and to get us right. **That is why Christ is our light.**

Christ came to get us to see what's right, and to get us right. That is why he is our light.

It is interesting that God made light on the very first day, whereas he made the sun only on the fourth day...(Wait until we get to the fourth day.)

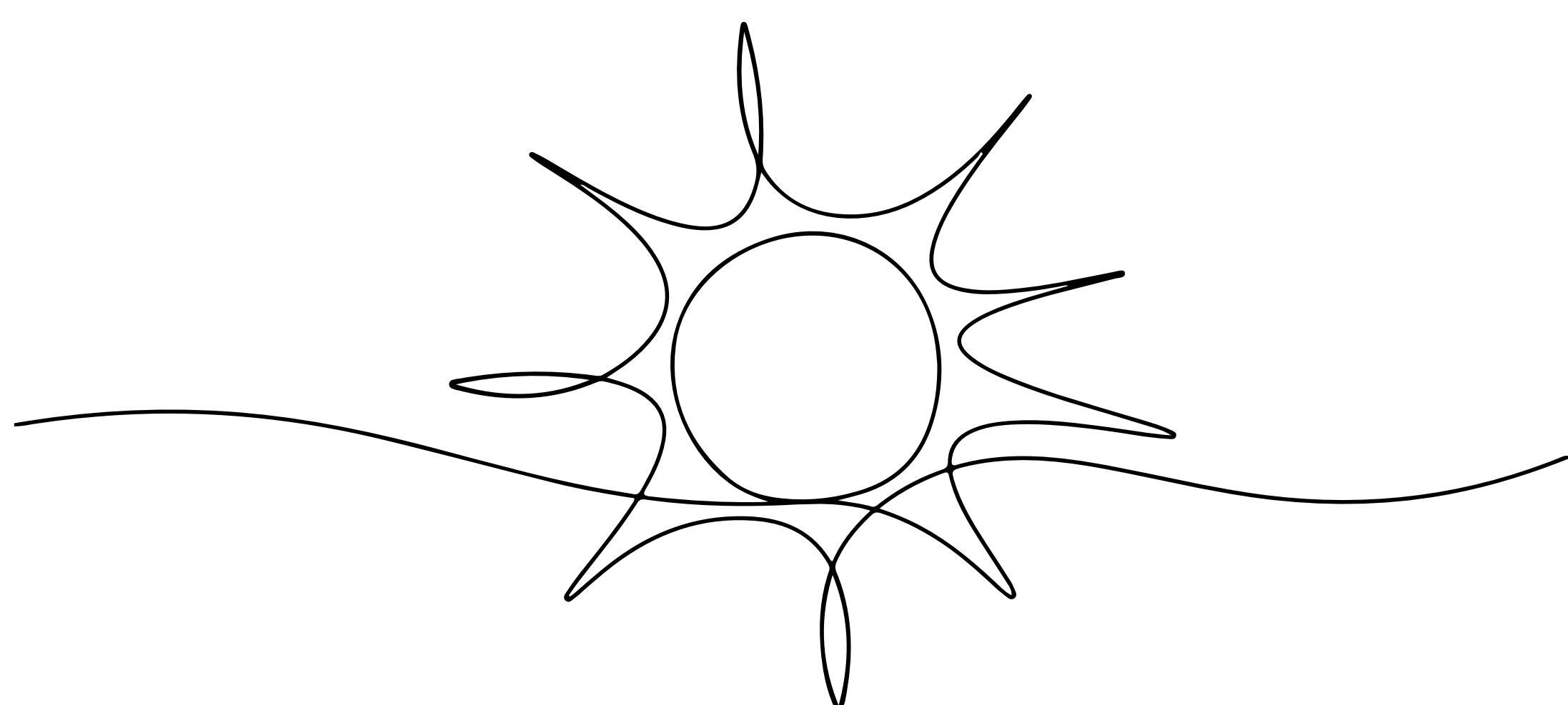
²**there was evening, and there was morning:** There are two important things about the evening and the morning:

- **God has made day and night a fixed thing.** There will always be night and day. You can be quite sure of it.
- **God said that his promises are as sure as day follows night.** In the same way that we can be certain that day will follow night we can also be just as confident that what God has promised shall definitely happen.

Take time to watch a sunset. It is a daily sign that life, for every one of us, is going to come to an end. It is even a sign that this world is going to come to an end.

Get up early and watch a sunrise. It is a daily sign that God's new world, the Kingdom of Heaven, is going to come. Each sunrise is a sign that God's promises will come true if we believe in him.

Each sunset is a sign that we shall one day leave this world. Each sunrise is a sign that we shall be welcomed into a better home if we love God with all our heart.



1:6-8 GOD CREATED THE SKY

¹Then God said: Let there be a great space covered by a huge roof amongst all this water, and let it separate some of the water from the rest of the water.

So God made the huge space in the air. It separated the water under the space from ²the water above in the space. It all worked out just as God wanted it to. In that space would be air and rain. Air and water are two of the most precious things in the world.

God called the space, “Sky.” There was evening and there was morning, the second day.

¹**A-great-space-covered-by-a-huge-roof:** The Hebrew word is a difficult one for us to translate. The old fashioned translation was “firmament.” Firmament means a large, firm covering. So the beautiful blue sky is a huge safe roof above us.

The huge space of air above us is what we call the atmosphere. In that space the birds fly and the clouds form. It is the air that we breathe. The atmosphere also protects us from the many dangers of outer space.

The air, or atmosphere, rises about 100 kilometres above us. Above that is outer space. The higher the atmosphere the thinner the air becomes. Above 100 kilometres (about 60 miles) there is no air whatsoever. Clouds can rise up as high as 10 kilometres or more above sea level. Passenger planes cannot fly higher than 12 kilometres because the air up there is too thin to hold up the wings of the plane.

God gives us far more good things than we realise. God also protects us from far more troubles than we are aware of.

Two most important things that we need in life are air and water. We need air to breathe every minute. We need water to drink every day. That should make us realise that we need God’s Spirit every minute, to live, and we need God’s refreshment every day, to keep going, especially when we find life difficult and frustrating – that is what the Bible means by being ‘thirsty.’

We get both from the skies. The atmosphere and rain are our sources of air and water. The Bible will go on to tell us that we have a very great need for God. He is not only

the source of truth, but also the source of all that we need in life. He made the air we breathe. He sends the water we drink.

He also provides the food we eat and the clothes we wear. He is looking after us all the time, and not only when we get desperate and pray for help. God gives us far more good things than we realise. God also protects us from far more troubles than we are aware of.

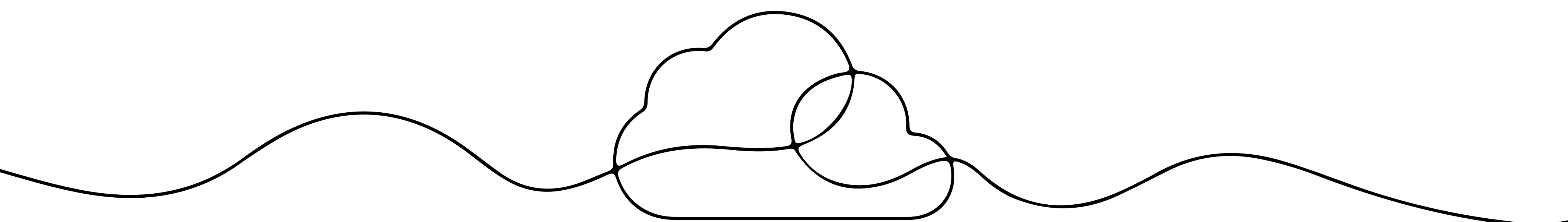
In the Bible the sky is also called heaven. This is to remind us that up there somewhere there is also a heaven, which is quite different from our world. Up there, in heaven, is where our future world and home is going to be.

the water above in the space: The water below the sky would become the seas, and the water up in the sky would become the clouds that give rain.

Sea-water is no use for plants or animals, but rain is absolutely essential for animals and people to drink and for plants to grow. Rain that does not go into the ground runs off it in the form of streams and rivers that lead to the sea.

God controls the rain. We need it so much. But it is in God's hands. He can send rain to bless us so that we can enjoy life. Or he can keep it away to warn us. He can also send storms and floods to punish us.

God controls the rain. We need it so much. But it is in God's hands. He can send rain to bless us so that we can enjoy life.



1:9-10 GOD MADE DRY LAND

Then God said: Let the waters under the sky be collected together into one place, and let ¹dry land rise up from under the seas.

So that is what happened. Dry land appeared out of all the water. God called the dry ground, “Land,” and he called all the waters that were gathered together, “Seas.” God then checked that ²it was good, and he was pleased with it. It was solid and firm.

¹dry land: The making of dry land was important. Land means firmness and stability. This is something that we have a great need for. The opposite is chaos. One of the worst experiences people can have is an earthquake, or an erupting volcano, or a flood, or a massive landslide down the side of a mountain. Land and safety is vital for any nation. Hills and mountains are also a sign of something permanent. They will always be there, generation after generation. That is a sign of what God is like. He is always there. God is the source of all stability and security in life, if we listen to him.

Over a quarter of planet earth is made up of dry land. Nearly three quarters of our planet is sea. Just over 70% is sea, and just under 30% is land. The highest point on land is Mount Everest in Nepal, to the north of India. The lowest point on land is the Dead Sea between Jordan and Israel, though mostly in Jordan. There is an even much lower valley, miles deep, under the ice in Antarctica. The ice covering Antarctica is several miles thick.

God loves to help us, just as we would love to help or save someone in need.

The land mass of earth is said to weigh nearly 6 six billion trillion tons*, which is more than one can explain. Six billion! It’s unthinkable! What great, almighty power did God use to raise this amount of land out of the seas? God is Almighty! We must learn to respect God, because he is stronger than we are. He’s much more powerful than all mankind put together.

²it was good: After a flood dry land is very good and comforting. Whenever we turn to God in our troubles, and he listens to us and helps us, it feels like coming out of a rough and threatening sea, and onto good, firm ground. That is what the Bible calls God’s salvation. It IS good! It’s comforting when God saves or helps us, when he gets us out of trouble, out of a mess or chaos or danger, and into a safe place. God loves to help or save us, just as we would love to help or save someone in need.

1:11-13 GOD MADE PLANTS

Then God said: Let the land produce fields covered with grass, and plants that have seeds and trees that give fruit. Let the trees each have their own special kind of fruit, with their own seeds in the fruit. Let all of this grow on the land.

Everything happened just as God said. The land did produce grass. It produced plants that have seeds from which will grow the same kind of plant. It also produced trees that give fruit. That fruit would have its own kind of seeds that will produce the same kind of tree. God saw to it that it was good. It would produce all kinds of food. God was pleased with what he saw. ¹It was satisfying! It was healthy and a pleasure! This was just what God wanted.

Then evening came, followed by the morning. That was the third day.

¹It was satisfying: One of the lessons we must learn in life is to be thankful to God for the things we have, especially food. Giving thanks to God reminds us that we are dependent on God for what we need. We should also be grateful to our parents for what they provide for us when we are children. We depend on them until we grow up. Learning to be thankful to our parents, and to appreciate what they do for us, trains us to become thankful to God. That's the way we learn to appreciate and worship him.

There are nearly 400,000 different types or species of plants in the world. Over 90% of them produce flowers. Just try to imagine thinking of so many different shapes and sizes and colours and smells or aromas, and even different ways of growing and different ways of producing seeds. Different plants also live for different lengths of time. There is just so much variety as well as

so much goodness in it all! It would be impossible to imagine how many blades of grass there must be on earth. Or to try to work out how many leaves on all the trees. But every single one is a miracle. They are all so complicated and clever. Each type is different, and every type works well. God made every one of them – and he still does! Many types of trees lose their leaves in the autumn, and get brand new leaves made in the spring. As young trees grow they get more new leaves. Grass, that gets eaten or mowed or even burnt, grows again. God keeps on doing all this.

Learning to be thankful for our parents trains us to become thankful to God.

Plants are a miracle that we can clearly see. How does the soil produce trees or bushes? How does the soil turn into so much wood? There are tons of wood in a big tree, yet the ground under the tree is not hollowed out by producing all that wood and moving it above ground. How does the same soil turn not only into wood but also into so many leaves? How does ground produce flowers and fruit? How does the rough earth turn into such tasty fruit, with so many different tastes, all growing out of the soil? How does that same soil turn into such beautiful flowers with such a lovely aroma or smell? How do so many different aromas come out of the same garden, or so many different colours? How does a seed turn into a plant? The more you try to think about all this the more of a mystery and miracle it seems. The answer is that God makes all things grow. God gets the land to turn into the things we need and like. What a wonderful God we've got! It is well worth our while to get to know God who makes all things grow in such amazing and useful ways.

It is useful to learn how healthy some plants are for our body and mind. Learn what they are

and how to use them, to live a better life. God has

put some first class products in many plants for our health. He has also provided so many marvellous flowers for our eyes, and even our nose, to enjoy. There are also lots of lovely sounds to please our ears, if we listen to natural life around us, such as the wind in the trees.

How does a seed turn into a plant? The more you try to think about all this the more of a mystery and miracle it seems.

***6 six billion trillion tons:**

A thousand is a hundred hundreds; a million is a thousand thousands; a billion is a thousand millions, and a trillion is a thousand billions. So a billion trillion means not just a thousand trillions and not just a million trillions, but a whopping great billion of trillions. This is too much for any of us to understand. That is exactly what God is like: He is much too great for any of us to understand. Even more than that, he is much too good for any of us to understand properly. All we can do is just to believe in him.

1:14-19 GOD MADE THE SUN, MOON AND STARS

God now said: Let there be lights in space, in the sky, to make the difference between day and night. They must also serve as ¹signs and seasons, and as days and years.

Let them be as lights up there in the sky, and let them give light for the earth.

That is what then happened. It all turned out exactly as God had ordered. It was magnificent! God made two big lights up there in the sky. The bigger, stronger light was the sun. It was to control the day. The lesser, more gentle light was the moon. It was to brighten up the dark night sky. God also made the stars.

God put them in the sky to give light on earth.

He made them ²to rule over or govern the day and the night. They were to make a clear difference between light and darkness. God saw to it that ³this was well done. He was pleased with what he saw. It was awesome! It was also all so reliable and so good for the world.

Then evening came, followed by the morning. That was the fourth day.

¹signs: Where the sun rises or sets on the horizon shows us how far the year has gone. If the sun has moved closer to the Arctic in the north then it is winter time in the southern hemisphere and summer in the north. If the sun moves towards the Antarctic in the south, then it is winter time in the northern hemisphere and summer in the south. The moon, by waxing and waning, growing more bright and then less bright, also shows us how far the month has gone. What the stars look like, and where they are in the sky, makes it possible for people to know exactly where they are if they are out at sea. Aeroplanes can also use the stars to guide them through the night.

But the sun, moon and stars are signs in another way. God knows that we need the **sun** to shine. But we need light not just outside but also inside us, in our soul. God wants to shine into our lives and make us feel good. God has also given us the **moon**. When the moon is full, even the darkness is lovely. The moon fades or wanes during one half of the month, and then waxes, or fills up with light, during the second half. This should encourage us. When life gets hard and unpleasant for us we must not give up. God will see to it that it gets brighter and better later on.

God has also put the stars in the sky for us. The stars are beautiful. They are awesome! They are utterly reliable. They keep their proper place in the night sky. There are so many of them. It's not possible to count them. One can spend one's whole life studying the **stars**. They are too amazing to explain. God says that the good things he wants us to have are like the many stars in the night sky. There are so many of them, and they are so lovely.

2to rule over or govern: The sun and the moon govern our lives, and the whole world, all the time, every day. The time, the days, the months, the seasons and the years are all based on the sun and moon, and are very accurate and reliable indeed. The stars are also as accurate and reliable as the sun and moon are.

Man can never change the way the skies work, or the rules by which they govern us. Nor should they ever be changed, because they are so good. Their timing is absolutely perfect. The sun, moon and stars do us a lot of good. Their light also shows up a lot of beauty. Beautiful things make us feel good. A great pleasure is to get up early and watch a new day dawning. Another treat is to relax and enjoy admiring the sunset. Though we cannot see God, we can see what he made. We can see it and touch it. We can hear it and smell it. We can taste it and feel it. We can experience it and enjoy it. That tells us something real about God whom we cannot see.

God has also given us commandments to obey. They are to rule our lives in the same excellent way that the sun and moon do. God's laws are to make us become good so that we can end up as stars in the kingdom of heaven. Just as we cannot change the way that the sun and moon rule in the sky, so we cannot change God's rules. They are perfect because he has given them to us. They are what are best for all of us.

Like high tides and low tides, good times and hard times happen in our lives. Highs and lows never stop coming and going.

3this was well done: It is impossible to tell anyone how wonderful the skies are. There are worlds out there that are far bigger than our world. There are suns in space that are far, far bigger than our sun. There are too many stars for anyone to count.

For most of history people believed that the sun circled around the earth the way the moon does. An Italian man called Galileo [ga-l'lee-oh] lived about the year 1600. He was a scientist. He invented a telescope, and used it to study the stars. His telescope could make the stars look twenty times bigger, or twenty times closer, than they appear to our sight. While looking into the skies he worked out that the sun does not circle around the earth, but rather the earth circles around the sun. It takes a year for the earth to get right around the sun. This was one of the beginnings of modern science.

It takes nearly a month for the moon to get around the earth. The moon is over 200,000 miles from earth, and is about a quarter the size of the earth. One great function the moon performs, because it is big enough and close enough to earth, is to pull at the seas. As it circles around the world it tugs at the oceans. This causes the waters in the seas to keep moving, just as the winds on the land keep moving. When the moon pulls the sea towards our shore-line it is high tide, and when it pulls the sea away the tide runs out. High tide and low tide never stop.

In the same sort of way good times and hard times happen in our lives. Highs and lows never stop coming and going.

The sun is nearly 100,000,000 (100 million) miles from the earth. The sun and moon look about the same size from earth, but the sun is 400 times larger than the moon. It is also about 400 times further from earth than the moon. The sun is more than 100 times bigger than the earth. The sun is almost 900,000 miles across, or well over a million kilometres. Its great heat causes the winds there to blow at over a million miles an hour.

Be careful not to look at the sun when it is bright, without clouds. It will damage your eyes. In the same way we can never see God: he is far too glorious for us to be able to see him.

God has put the earth at exactly the right distance from the sun. It's not too close and too hot, nor is it too far and too cold for us. God has made sure that we can live and be comfortable. The distances out in space among all those stars are unbelievable. One cannot understand that light from those stars would take billions of years to reach us, when light travels at 186,000 miles in just one second.

In the same way we cannot understand how great God is who made all of this. We would not be able to see him because he is too bright, far, far brighter than the sun. All we know is that he is great, utterly marvellous, perfectly wonderful and absolutely awesome! He deserves all our respect and admiration. There's no one else like him. We should worship him. Worship means to appreciate him, like him and respect him. We must thank him, love him and fear him. To fear him means to obey him. Fear means that we do not dare disobey him.

It is interesting that God made light before he made the sun. This is to show us that light, the sign of truth, is forever. The sun is not forever. One day, far in the future, the sun is going to burn out and be no more. There is nothing in this world that will last forever. It will all come to an end sometime. But God and his light and truth, and his love and plans, are eternal. They will never burn out. They will never come to an end. If you read the Bible you are reading something that will outlast even the world and the sun.

1:20-23 GOD CREATED FISH AND BIRDS

Then God said: Let the water everywhere swarm with lots of life, with huge numbers of living creatures. Let birds also fly above the ground. Let them fly around freely, up in the sky.

So God created huge amounts of ¹fish and sea creatures. He gave them life so that they could live and move around. He created great swarms of them in the water, millions and billions and trillions of them. On top of this each type of fish was a special kind. God also made all the ¹birds that can fly. Each type of bird was also its own special kind. God saw to it that it was all good. God liked what he saw. God had now made life. Life is a marvellous thing! There were now lots of different kinds of living creatures on earth. It was all very fascinating!

²God blessed all these living creatures. God said: Be useful. Produce your little ones. Grow and increase your numbers. Fill the waters of the seas with life. Let the numbers of the different sorts of birds in the world also increase.

Then it was evening, and morning, the fifth day.

¹fish and birds: The new idea about creating the fish and the birds was that they had life in them. They could breathe. They could also move around as they pleased. They could even move up or down. They are different from plants that grow and stay in just one place.

FISH: The main thing about the fish, or sea-creatures, was that there were so many of them. The greatest movement or migration of living creatures in the world is among the fish. The greatest swarm of fish in the world are the sardines that swim along the eastern coast of South Africa. Where there are so many sardines there will be larger fish to feed on them, as well as many birds diving into the sea to catch them. Other fish also migrate, some of them deep down in the oceans. Salmon migrate far out to sea and then migrate back to the very same river they were born in to lay their eggs. How they find the right river is a mystery. Sharks travel thousands of miles through the seas. Whales also travel many miles from where they feed in the cold waters of the Antarctica to where they give birth in the warmer waters, such as South Africa, where they are a great tourist attraction. The largest living creature in the world is the massive Blue Whale. It is up to 100 feet or 30 metres long, and can weigh anything up to 200 tons.

Many people love fishing. Another fascinating hobby is diving and swimming around among the fish. There are over 30 000 different types or species of fish that we know of. There are many trillions of fish in the sea. There are more fish than any other kind of creature, but they are all out of our sight, under the surface of the sea. Even the largest creatures in the world are unseen most of the time. So we cannot see most of what God has made. But it IS all there! In the same way we cannot see all that God is doing in people's lives all over the world. But he is there, doing many wonderful things for so many people. What God is doing is amazing, and it's because God is amazing.

BREAKING NEWS:

The Bible says that God created fish in vast numbers: the sea was teeming with them.

In February 2021 scientists discovered a new fish breeding colony in the Antarctic. In the past they knew that there were about 60 breeding nests in that area. Each nest was a small circle of stones on the ocean floor of mud. Early in 2021 they discovered that the breeding colony is actually about the size of Malta Island (which is in the Mediterranean Sea). They found that instead of just 60 breeding nests there are an estimated 60

million breeding spots there. Each breeding nest contains over 1,700 eggs that are being protected by either a male or a female adult. That is over 100,000,000,000 (a hundred billion) fish eggs in one breeding season in one tiny, tiny area of the vast, vast seas. Of course there are also at least 120 million parent fish looking after those eggs. Those fish have transparent blood and brains that prevents their blood from freezing in those icy conditions.

Even the largest creatures in the world are unseen most of the time. So we cannot see most of what God has made. But it IS all there!

How true and reliable is the Bible from the beginning!

BIRDS: The main thing about the birds was that they had the freedom to fly around up in the air. The albatross bird has a wingspan of over ten feet. Some birds can stay in the air for months. Some can fly right around the world. Some can even sleep while flying. A certain type of vulture can fly over 35,000 feet high, which is as high as passenger aeroplanes fly. There is a type of goose that flies regularly over the Himalaya Mountains at heights of nearly 30,000 feet. The fastest creature in the world is the Peregrine Falcon, which can fly at speeds up to 300 kilometres an hour as it hunts its prey in the air. There are at least 10,000 different species of birds. (There are 30,000 types of fish and 10,000 types of birds.) A favourite hobby for some people is bird watching. They get to know all the different types of birds in an area. They take photos of them, or film them and what they do and how they fly.

Birds have been flying since the beginning of the world. But it took man thousands of years, until about the year 1900, to learn to fly. Two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright carefully studied how birds fly. Then, at Kitty Hawk in America, they succeeded in getting a primitive aeroplane up into the air. Their first effort got them into the air for just over 10 seconds. But their plane went over 100 feet (30 metres) up into the air. That was a great achievement. I wonder if any birds watched that effort, and what they may have thought of it... Over a hundred years before that people were able to go up into the air in a huge balloon. But a balloon just goes where the wind blows. It does not really fly.

Ever since the invention of flight, flying has been something of a risky business. Many people have died while flying. It takes a lot of highly trained people and a huge amount of time to make sure that flying in an aeroplane is safe. But for birds, flying is quite safe, wherever they go, however high they fly or however far they travel when they migrate. Some birds travel for over 15,000 miles, and take up to two months for the journey. The Arctic Tern flies from near the North Pole to near the South Pole each year. It is amazing to watch some massive flocks of birds, hundreds of thousands of them, or even millions, all flying together. They are so close that one cannot tell one bird from another.

Yet not one of them crashes into any other. What is perhaps even more astonishing is to see masses of bats, numbering as much as a million or so, flying together at night. They all fly safely AND they are all blind! What God has made!

²God blessed all these living creatures: God gave all these creatures the gift of life. God's blessing means two things: God wants his creatures to have life, and he also wants them to enjoy it. He wanted the fish to be swimming around freely in the seas and the birds flying freely in the skies. They were meant to enjoy life. They would also be there for us to enjoy.

An extra blessing that God gave his creatures was that they would be able to give birth to little ones. A most important part of the lives of fish and birds is to give birth to their young. In this way every type of fish or fowl would increase in their numbers. It's a great thing to have a family, even for birds or fish! Birds are well known for the way they look after their young until they can fly. Many fish just leave God to look after their young when they are born – and he does!

God wants his creatures to have life, and he also wants them to enjoy it.

1:24-25 GOD MADE ANIMALS

Then God said: Let the land produce ¹animals, living creatures, each one of a certain kind. Let the land support animals for farming, and animals that can move around in nature and live off the land. All these animals are to be of special types or species. That is what then happened.

God made different kinds of animals that live on the land. He made all sorts of different species of animals that can move around in the countryside. God saw to it that it was well done. God approved of what he had made. It was good. It was excellent and marvellous. Animals are so interesting, and all of them are very well made. We also like animals, just as God does.

¹animals: It seems that there are over a million species of animals on earth. It may be much more than a million. People keep on discovering more types of animals.

There was a time when people used to hunt certain types of animal until there were very few of that type left. Now people try to look after the animals and protect them and help them survive. There are even special efforts to help some types that have nearly died out to recover their numbers. Animals are important to us. Some kinds of animals are used for farming. Many others live in the wild. Even wild animals need to be cared for and looked after. Some animals are friendly and some are harmless. But there are those that are dangerous. In heaven all animals will be great fun to live with. They won't fight or harm or kill anymore. Imagine playing with a lion or a tiger! Imagine an elephant swinging you up onto its neck, or a furry bear cuddling you to sleep. God has given us animals to love and enjoy, and in heaven all animals will love us too.

God wants us to learn to care about animals so that we can learn from that how to care about people.

The important thing about animals is that they are our responsibility. God has put us in charge of them. We are to care for them and look after them. Animals need us. Many animals depend on humans for food and water. Even wild animals need us to look after the world so that they can live safely in it.

A great problem that is always with us is cruelty to animals. Some animals suffer tremendously from being neglected or badly treated. We should not only look after our own animals well, but also do what we can if we come across animals suffering. We need to try to help them, especially if they suffer because of the way that people mistreat them.

God wants us to learn to care about animals so that we can learn from that how to care about people. The two most important things that we have to learn in life are how to get to know God and how to understand people. Caring for animals helps us to learn to respect God who made them, and it also teaches us to care for people. Looking after animals is not easy, but it's a very good thing to do.

Caring for animals helps us to learn to respect God who made them, and it also teaches us to care for people.

1:26-28 GOD CREATED MAN

Then God said: ¹Let us make man. Let us make man ²in our own image. We shall make him like God, so that he is able to rule and to be the leader of all that we have made. Let him rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air. Let him be in control of the animals, and take charge of the whole earth and all the creatures that move about on the land. We want man to care for them and look after them.

So God created man. He created man like himself, someone who is capable and caring. He created him as a reflection of God. God created both man and woman.

God blessed them. He wanted them to live good, useful and happy lives. God said to them: Increase in number, and fill the world. You two must be in charge of the earth. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, and over all the living animals that move around on land. The best thing that God created was the last thing he made. It was man and woman, and from them, boys and girls.

¹Let us: Why did God say, “Let us?”

First, it is most important to understand that there is only one true God. God alone made man. No one else helped him. We human beings certainly did not help God to make us.

God is very complicated. There is a lot about God that we do not understand at all, and much that we find difficult to get to know about.

Even the word “man” is complicated. It really means mankind. It means human or humanity. It means everyone, men and women, boys and girls. All of us are human. Humanity is also very complicated. One will spend one’s whole life trying to understand people. But God is far, far more complicated than that. GOD means someone too wonderful to understand and too marvellous for words.

When God created the world and life, the Holy Spirit was there. The Holy Spirit is God, and he worked with God. He did what God wanted. When God made man, the most important thing about man is that he would have the Spirit of God in him.

When God said, “Let us make man like us,” he was creating both man and woman. Man and woman together are “man”. So God and his Holy Spirit are also “us.”

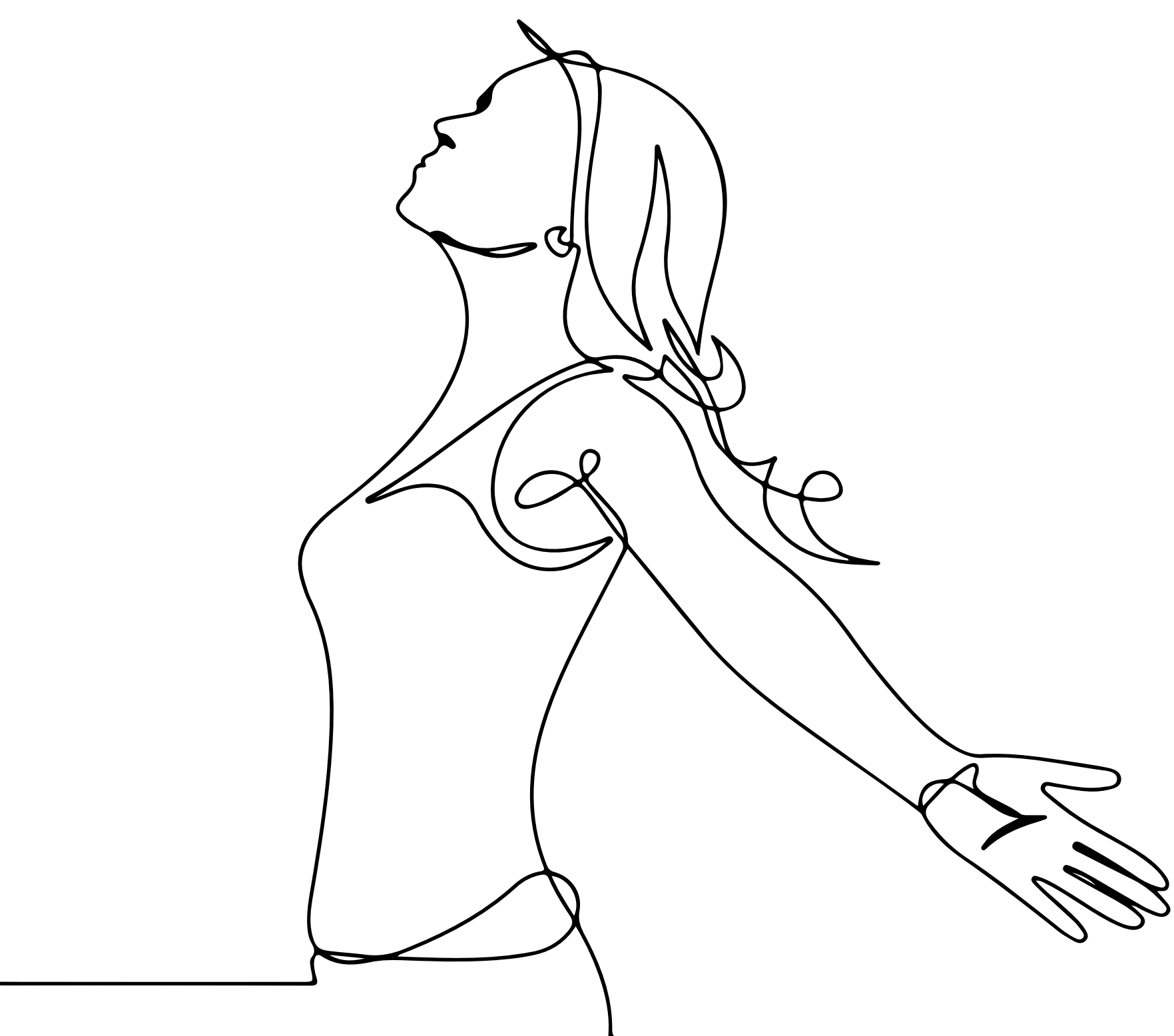
²in our own image: God made man and woman in a special way. Man, or mankind, is much more wonderfully made than the animals or anything else in creation. Man is like God in some ways, just as children are like their parents in some ways.

The main way in which man was created like God is that he is able to rule over the rest of creation. Man can think and get things done in a way that animals cannot. Man can do what is right and honour God. Man can talk and explain things. Man can be God's friend. Man can love and do a lot of good. God made man to look after everything in the world that he has made.

Made in the image of God means that we are to be good rulers of God's creation.

Of all creation, God is especially good to us.

That we are made in the image of God means that we are to be good, just as God is good. Made in the image of God means that we are to be good rulers of God's creation.



1:29-31 GOD SUPPLIED FOOD

Then God said to man: I have given you all plants that produce seeds everywhere on earth, and all the trees that have fruit and produce seeds. All this will be good food for you.

It will also be food for every living creature on earth, and for every bird in the sky, and for every creature moving around on the land. This food is for every single living thing. ¹All these plants will be food for all of you. And that is how it was and will always be. All living creatures must have food. We cannot live or be healthy without it. We need it to be strong and able to do things.

God was very pleased with all that he had made. It was very, very good. It was excellent! It was such a wonderful blessing, especially for man! Then there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

¹All these plants will be food for all of you: Food is important for all of us, and for all creatures. Even plants need food, which they get out of the soil. We need food to grow, and we need food to be able to work. We not only need food, but we also enjoy good food.

We can easily see that many animals depend on people for their food. This is especially true of tame animals and farm animals. What is not so easy to see is that all of us depend on God for food. God is able to provide every person, and every creature, with the food they need for their whole life-time.

What we can see is that the food we all need depends on the weather. Food needs sunshine and rain in order to grow. It is also not difficult to realise that the weather is in God's hands. He decides how much rain to send, and he decides how hot the summer is to be and how cold the winters are.

To live you need food, but to live forever, said Jesus, you need me.

What God has promised in the Bible is this: If we listen to him and obey him, he will look after us and supply what we need.

God's prophets told the people of God very clearly that if they obeyed God he would fill them with good food. If they refused to listen to him then God would punish them

by causing them to suffer shortages of what they needed. These prophecies were made over and over again. And God did exactly what the prophets said he would do.

In the New Testament Jesus Christ taught us something even more important about food. He said, I am the food of life. To live you need food, but to live forever, said Jesus, you need me. However much good food people may have all their lives, they are still going to die. But Jesus promised that the food that he gives us means that we shall never die. We shall just leave this life and go straight to heaven.

Learn this lesson from food: God made food so that you would be dependent on it to live. God has also sent Jesus so that you can find and enjoy life permanently, forever and ever. The secret to life is food; the secret to everlasting life is Jesus Christ. All we have to do with food is grow it and prepare it, and then eat and enjoy it. What we must do with Jesus is listen to him, trust him, obey him and love him. Just as we put food in our tummy and enjoy it, so we must take the Lord Jesus to heart. We must believe in him and love him. Jesus Christ is God's greatest gift to us in the same way that food is God's good gift to us in creation.

**Jesus Christ is
God's greatest gift
to us in the same
way that food is
God's good gift to
us in creation.**

CHAPTER 2

In this chapter we look at the creation of man in more detail. It tells us how man was made, and what work he was given to do. It also tells us how God created man and woman. To begin with it tells us what God did on the seventh day.

2:1-3 GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY

So the universe and the whole earth were finished, as well as the great and wonderful things in them.

By the seventh day God had finished his work. So ¹he rested on the seventh day from the work he had done.

Therefore God blessed the seventh day by making it a special and different day. He made it holy. He blessed it because on that day he rested from all his great work of creation that he had done.

¹he rested on the seventh day: During the week, man rests at night. We rest so as to get strength for the next day. But on the Sabbath, we can rest for the whole day as well as two nights in a row. This gives us strength in our body and mind and also in our spirit for the next week.

Since we do not work on the Sabbath there are two things we can do:

- The first is to give more time to **worship God** for his greatness, and for his goodness to us.
- The second is to **enjoy life** that God has given us.

The Hebrew word for “rest” is “Sabbath”. So, “**He rested on the seventh day**” means that the seventh day was God’s Sabbath.

The whole idea of the Sabbath is that if we are to get the most out of life we need to do two things:

- **First**, we shall not get something good out of life unless we work for it. To get what we would like in life, or to put some good into life, we must be prepared to work.

- But, **secondly**, we cannot enjoy life if all we do is work. To enjoy what we have worked for we need to stop and relax. We need to remember what is important in life, and what is truly good. We need to get some comfort and encouragement. That is what the Sabbath is for. Life is so complicated and hard and uncertain that we need to spend time with God.

When God finished his work, he saw that it was very good, and then rested with pleasure. The holiness of the Sabbath means that to make life good, we need something even better than work. We need to be truly thankful and we need real peace. We need to take a break to feel how good God is to us. That is what will make life really good. We also need hope. Hope is when we know that everything is going to turn out well in the end. When one has hope, one can keep going through difficult and even sad times. Hope means that God will get all things to come right eventually. The Sabbath is most important for building up hope in us.

Hope means that God will get all things to come right eventually. The Sabbath is most important for building up hope in us.

2:4-9 GOD PLANTED A GARDEN

Now this is what happened next when the skies and the earth were created, at the time the Lord God made the earth and the sky.

To begin with, not all the plants of the field were growing yet. Nor had the crops of the field started growing. This was for two reasons: First, because the Lord God had not made it rain on the land, and secondly, because there was no man to farm the land.

Then an underground stream came up out of the ground. It produced a useful wet mist that watered all the land around it. That solved the first problem.

To solve the second problem, the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the soil, and breathed life into him through his nose. So the man became a living being or person. Life means that we are always breathing. (We normally breathe through our nose.)

Then the Lord God planted a garden in¹Eden to start with, and that is where he put the man whom he had formed.

There God made things grow out of the ground. He grew good looking trees and tasty fruit trees. Right in the middle of the garden was a different sort of tree. It was a fruit tree that held the secret to²the knowledge of good and bad, what is right and what is wrong. That tree was about knowing what is true, but also what is false or a lie.

¹**Eden:** Eden is a Hebrew word meaning a lovely, beautiful place to make us happy.

²**the knowledge of good and bad:** Man is in charge of the world, so life is a big responsibility. Responsibility means that it is important to know what is right, and to do it. We must also know what is wrong or foolish, and what is bad or harmful.

This special tree was there just like a sign. It was meant to encourage man to be good. It was also meant to warn man all the time not to do wrong things and make stupid mistakes.

2:10-14 THE RIVERS OF EDEN

A river was flowing from Eden. It was to water the garden. From there it divided into four and became the sources of great or ¹major rivers.

The first river curved its way through a land where there was gold.

The gold of that land was of a high quality. There were other good things there, like perfume and precious stones.

The second river curved or wound its way through a country that was then called ²Cush.

The name of the third river was the ³Tigris. It runs past the front, or east, of Asshur [a-shoor]. Asshur is better known as the powerful country of Assyria. Today Assyria is known as Syria. The fourth river is the ⁴Euphrates [yoo-fray-tees].

¹major rivers: We do not know where the first two rivers were. We just know that their water was important, and that people settled along those rivers. The rivers all came from Eden. The third and fourth rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, are well-known. Today they start in mountains to the east of Turkiye, not far south of the Black Sea. The Euphrates starts near the Caspian Sea, goes around the start of the Tigris River and then flows parallel to the Tigris, and to the south of it. The Euphrates flows through Syria and Iraq and is more than 1600 miles long. The Tigris flows roughly parallel to and north of the Euphrates, through Iraq and past Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. The Tigris River is over 1000 miles long. The two rivers join together about 100 miles before they get to the sea. They then flow into what used to be called the Persian Gulf, just north of Kuwait.

But what is important for the Bible is that these two great rivers flowed through two powerful countries and famous ancient civilizations. The first half of these two rivers flowed through Assyria, while the bottom half of both rivers passed through Babylonia. Assyria was the country that destroyed the northern country of Israel. Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar, took the southern tribe of Judah, the Jews, into exile. It put an end to the kings of Judah who were descended from King David.

²Cush: We do not know where this country Cush was. In the rest of the Bible, the name Cush means Ethiopia. Ethiopia is in Africa, up-river from Egypt, on the Nile.

³the Tigris: The Tigris River flows from near where Noah's ark came to ground after the flood. It flows through Assyria and on down through the country of Babylonia.

the Euphrates: The Euphrates is the most important river in the Bible. Many times in the Bible it is just called, “The River”, in the same way that the Mediterranean Sea is often just called, The Sea. The Euphrates has sweet or nice tasting water. That is what “eu” means: “sweet” or “good”. The Euphrates goes past where Babylon used to be.

From this one can see that there are some places in the Bible that we know nothing about, and there are other places in the Bible that we do know. This part of the Bible was written well over a thousand years before Christ. A lot has changed since then, but there are also a lot of things that have not changed. One of the values of the Bible is that it was written so long ago. That means that the Bible has been there throughout history. So it would have been read by many people over thousands of years.

The Bible has another side to rivers. Water is vital for life. Water comes from God. It comes from above, from rain. A river means that people always have water. They can use whatever they want or need. So people liked to settle near rivers or streams or wherever there was water that they could help themselves to. But rain is something that remains in God’s hands. We have to wait for rain. Even the rivers get their water from rain. We are to trust God to send us water.

**Water is vital
for life. Water
comes from God.**

The Garden of Eden was the perfect place for man. One of the big things that made it so good or ideal was that there was that great river there. This would be useful to Adam and Eve as they looked after their wonderful garden with its animals and plants. In the Garden of Eden God supplied water generously.

We should all learn to drink water. It is good for our health. It is even good for our bones. Try to drink some pure water every day – just plain, clean water. It is a special gift to us from God. When one becomes very thirsty, really thirsty, water is the loveliest thing there is to drink. Nothing can beat it.

God has three special uses for water:

Water is to save us from **thirst**.

Water is to get things, and us, **clean**.

Water is to make things **grow**.

2:15-17 GOD PUT MAN IN EDEN

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to farm it and look after it.

The Lord God gave an order to the man. He told him: You are completely free to eat from every tree in the garden.

But, you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of ¹what is right and what is wrong. You must keep your conscience clean. As soon as you eat from that fruit you will have to die.

¹what is right and what is wrong: The secret of life lies in two things:

- **First**, we are to enjoy life. That's what God wants us to do. He gives us lots of good things, and the freedom to enjoy ourselves. Adam and Eve were free to eat from every tree, and there were many of them. The secret to enjoying life is to do what is right and good. That is what God wants for us. That is why he made everything so good.
- **Secondly**, we must make sure that we do NOT do what is wrong. No matter what happens, nor whatever might happen, we must not do what is bad or ugly. We must never disobey God or do what is unacceptable to him. We must always keep our conscience clear and clean.

The tree of the knowledge of good and bad was there for a good reason. It was to encourage Adam and Eve and their children to do what is good. It was also there to warn them not to do anything bad.

But God also had another reason that the Bible tells us about later on. God can see into the future. He knew that many nasty things were going to happen in the world. But God can do anything. He knew that even if the world became a wicked place, spoilt and ruined by evil, he could still get good out of it. He has not only created man. He also cares about man. He wants man to escape from what is bad and return to what is good. He wants to save us even though we have many faults.

God wants man to escape from what is bad and return to what is good.

God wants to save us.

So this tree was meant to show us that from the beginning God knew that he was taking a chance when he created man. But that is what he wanted to do. Parents also take a chance when they have children, but that is what they want to do. They love their children despite their naughtiness or foolishness. They want to steer them away from what is wrong to what is good for them as they grow up.

It is the same with God. God knew that he could save his people even if they disobeyed him and would have to die. God knew that he could bring good out of what is bad, and life out of death, just as he brought light out of darkness and life out of nothing.

Out of our faults God brings us hope.

That is what the Bible is all about.

That is the message of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

2:18-24 GOD MADE WOMAN FOR MAN

Then the Lord God took a decision. He said: It is not good enough that the man is all alone. I will make a helper for him that will be like him, and that he will like.

So first of all the Lord God made, from the soil, every living animal that is out in the fields, as well as every bird in the skies. The Lord God brought these to the man to see how he would like them and what he would name each one. This meant that all these creatures would ¹get their names from man.

So the man gave names to all the animals and to the birds that fly, and to all the animals that live out in the fields. Yet, despite getting to know all these living creatures, the man could not find a real partner that was good enough or suitable for him.

So the Lord God put the man into a very deep sleep. Then while he was unconscious God took one of his ribs out and closed up his chest where the rib had been.

The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman. So woman was made from man, not just from soil. This helps explain why women are more beautiful, and girls are so lovely, not just in looks but in nature too. God then brought the woman to the man.

The man, ²Adam, was pleased. He was delighted and grateful. He celebrated by saying:

*At last! She's ³bone of my bones,
and flesh of my flesh.*

Because of this I've decided that she is to be called "woman" [wo-man] since she was taken out of a man's body. In Hebrew a man is "ish" and a woman is "ishah" [ish-ah].

This explains why a grown man normally leaves the home of his father and his mother, and links up with his wife to become a couple. Together they can make their own home and start their own family. That is what our parents did, and that is what most children are going to do when they grow up.

Children do not live for a very long time with their parents. That could be for only about 20 years. But a married couple could be together for over 50 years.

¹get their names from man: When Adam gave names to all the animals, it meant that he was then in charge of them. He was like a father to them. He was responsible to care for them. In the same way parents give names to their children, and then look after them.

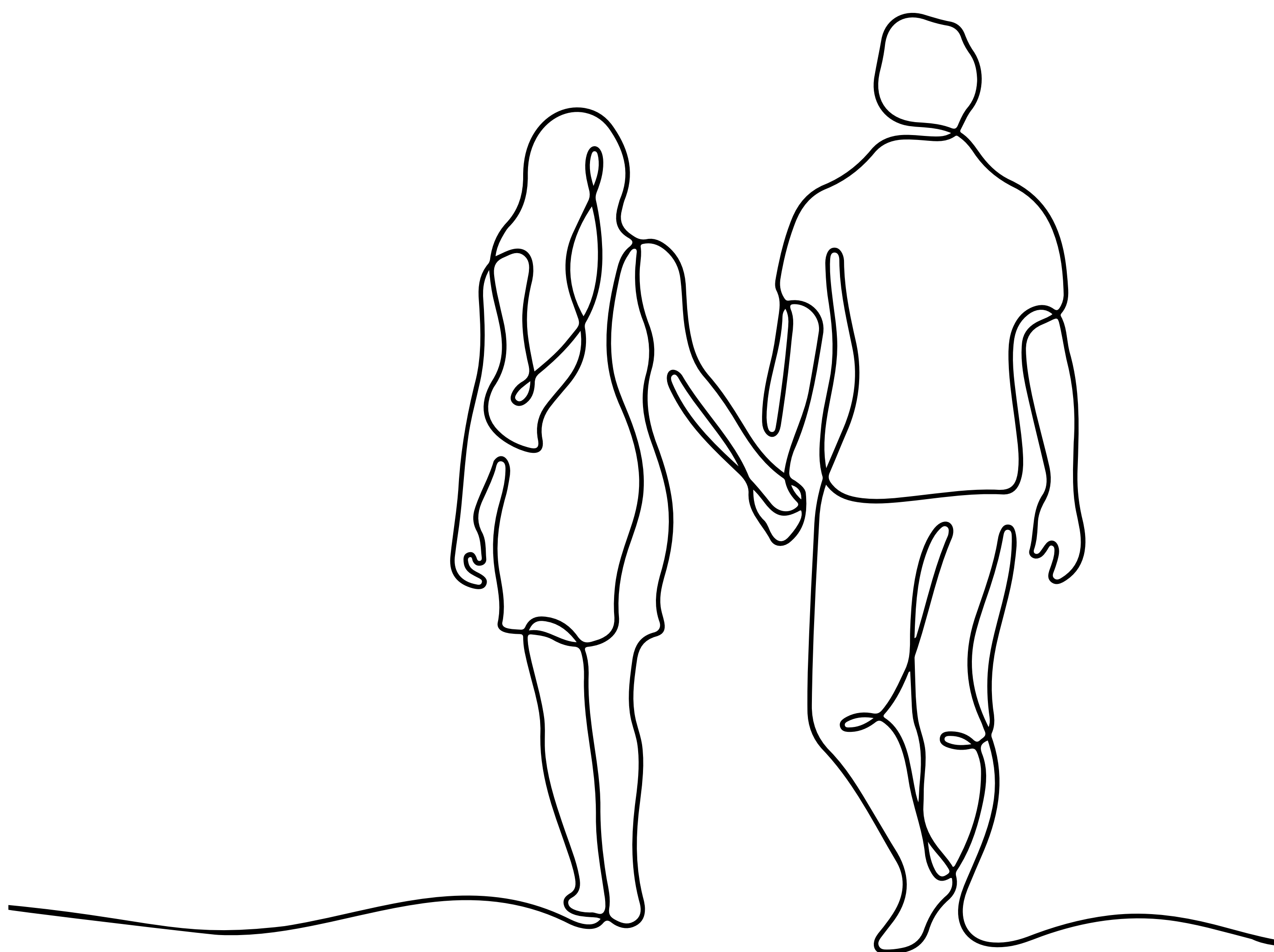
²Adam: “Adam” [a-dim] is a Hebrew word for “man.” The Hebrew word for ground or soil is “adamah” [a-dum-ah]. Man was made from the earth that God created. (Both “ish” and “adam” mean a man.)

³bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: This is a bit of Hebrew poetry. What it says is that the man likes the woman because she will give him strength, as his bones do. He loves her because she will give him happiness and pleasure, as his body does. She is his friend. He is so grateful for her, like a bridegroom on his wedding day, the happiest day of his life!

Bone of my Bones, and Flesh of my Flesh

means

**They will live together,
be stronger together,
and enjoy life more together.**



CHAPTER 3

The biggest problem there is in life is this: If God made the world so well and so good, why is it now so bad, with so much suffering? This next chapter answers this sad question.

Chapter 3 really begins with the last verse of chapter 2, which says the following:

2:25 HOW ADAM AND EVE BEGAN LIFE

So the universe and the whole earth were finished, as well as the great and wonderful things in them. By the seventh day God had finished his work. So he rested on the seventh day from the work he had done. Therefore God blessed the seventh day by making it a special and different day. He made it holy. He blessed it because on that day he rested from all his great work of creation that he had done.

3.1-3 THE SNAKE ASKS EVE A QUESTION

From among all the animals in the countryside that the Lord God had made, ¹the snake was the ²clever one. So it asked the woman: Is it true that God said that you can't eat the fruit from all the trees in this garden? Did God really say that you are not allowed to have whatever you want?

So the woman said to the snake: O no! God said that it's alright for us to eat from all the fruit of any of the trees in the garden. We can eat anything we like.

But there is just one tree right in the middle of the garden, and God warned us not to eat its fruit. He told us: You must not touch it at all, or else you will die. Don't have anything to do with it!

1the snake: To begin with all animals were lovely and safe and friendly towards Adam and Eve. And that is how they are going to be in heaven too.

Animals are different and have different abilities. People believed two things about snakes:

- **First, that they were clever, because of the way they hunted.** They would lie very still for a long time and not move at all. Their prey would not notice that they were there. Then, suddenly, they would strike.
- **Secondly, that they were dangerous.** They were poisonous.

In this very early part of the Bible we see the devil using the snake.

Many people do not believe that a snake talked. But the Bible is full of amazing miracles. A talking snake is just one of many surprising things written about in the Bible that we cannot explain. Later on there is also a case of a donkey talking to a very clever man who was going to do a very foolish thing. We cannot explain miracles. It is best to believe the Bible from beginning to end. To understand the Bible we have to believe it. People who do not believe the Bible can never understand it. It is obvious that if God is real he would perform miracles. He allowed the devil to use the snake to talk to Eve. Jesus said that God could even make the stones talk if he wanted to.

To begin with, snakes were not poisonous and dangerous. The Garden of Eden was a sign that the world is going to be a very different place when heaven comes. There will never be anything dangerous there. The Bible not only tells us the truth about the past, but it tells us the truth about the future too.

To be able to believe in what the Bible says about the future,

we need to be able to believe what the Bible says about the past.

²**clever:** In Hebrew the word for “clever” and the word for “naked” are the same sort of word. The Hebrew words are telling us that the devil used the snake’s **cunning** to take advantage of Eve’s **innocence**.

3.4-7 THE SNAKE TEMPTS THE WOMAN

The snake said to the woman: ¹I promise you that you will not be put to death. God did not mean that. You two will not lose your lives.

For God realises that when you eat from this tree you will find out that you are free. You will be just like God. You will be free to decide for yourselves what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. The two of you will then be able to do what you feel like doing, and you will be free to decide what you don't want to do. God was just trying to put you off by scaring you.

So the woman then thought that the fruit of that tree would be good to eat as food. It also looked very nice. But the big thing was that if they ate that fruit they would become wise. They would be clever and smart, like God. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave it to her husband who was with her. And he ate it too.

But then they discovered something that they had not noticed before. They realised that they were naked. They suddenly felt embarrassed. So they got hold of some large fig leaves and made for themselves something to wear.

¹I promise you: There is a big problem with what the devil said to Eve. What he said was true in a way. Eve did not die when she ate the fruit. It was not poisonous. But what the snake had said was only half true. The devil did not tell Eve that she would die in the end, just as God had warned. One half was true, but the other half was a poisonous lie.

The most dangerous kind of lie is one that starts with a half-truth. If one believes the part that is true, one is then likely to believe the rest of it that is not true. Watch out for that!

3.8-13 BOTH OF THEM HAVE TO ANSWER TO GOD

Then they heard the voice of ¹The Lord God call them. He was visiting them in the garden ²at the time when the breeze blows. But instead of welcoming the Lord God, the man and his wife ran away. They tried to hide from God among the bushes in the garden.

But the Lord God demanded to see the man. He called out to him: Where are you?

The man had to answer: I heard you call in the garden, but I could not bring myself to face up to you. I felt so bad because I was naked. So I ran away and hid myself.

The Lord God asked him: Who showed you that you were naked? Who explained that to you? Did you disobey me? ³Did you eat from the tree that I told you clearly NOT to eat?

The man answered: The woman you kindly gave me to be with me as my wife and helper and friend - she produced the fruit from the tree and offered it to me. I never thought that anything harmful would come from her, so I ate it. So yes, I did eat it!

Then the Lord God spoke to the woman: What is this about? What have you done? The woman answered: I'm afraid the snake tricked me, and I was completely taken in by it. That's why I ate it. I know I should never have allowed myself to listen to him. But yes, I did eat it!

¹the Lord God: Usually our Creator is called “God.” Here he is called, “The Lord God.” This title shows us God’s authority. He is the Big Boss, the Judge. He is completely in charge. One day we shall all have to face him, and answer to him for what we have done.

²at the time when the breeze blows: Toward the end of the day a light breeze would start to blow. This was the time when people would stop work and go home for supper. People would get together to relax. They would then share their news about the day, and enjoy one another’s company. It was a time to build up friendships. So it was a problem when God came to visit them, because they had

Instead of enjoying the Lord’s visit, they tried to hide away from him.

disobeyed him. Instead of enjoying the Lord's visit, they tried to hide away from him. One is always awkward and embarrassed when one has done something wrong. We do not like to meet people when we have let them down or failed them.

³Did you eat from the tree that I told you clearly NOT to eat? The Lord God asked Adam and Eve these questions. He asked the questions for two reasons:

- The **first** reason is to get to the truth. Questions bring out the truth.
- The **second** reason is to get them to see that what they had done was wrong. When one has done what is right, it is a pleasure to answer any questions. One is proud to be able to answer them. But when one has done what is wrong, it is painful and embarrassing. One feels bad. One feels guilty.

The Lord asked these questions to get the man to see that what he has done was wrong.

3.14-15 GOD PUNISHES THE DEVIL

Verse 15 is important. It explains why life is so hard, but why we can live with hope despite the problems we face. This verse says that there is a great war going on. It is between a son of Eve, and his enemy, the devil. The Son of Eve will be a special man. For the sake of humanity he will fight the devil. Although he will get hurt, he will defeat the devil. In this war we too will struggle and get hurt, but we shall also win in the end, thanks to a future special son of Adam and Eve. This verse is the first sign in the Bible that a Messiah would come for us from God.

Then the Lord God told the snake: Because you have caused this trouble you will be punished. I am angry with you. You are going to get into big trouble. You will be hated more than any other animal. From now on you will be reduced to ¹crawling around on your belly. No one will want you. You will ²bite the dust, and spend your life lonely and silent. You will suffer for what you have done. You are ³cursed.

Now we come to this famous verse 15:

The Lord God said to the snake: ⁴I shall bring war between you and the woman, and between ⁵your offspring and her offspring. He is going to hurt you, and you are going to hurt him. He will destroy your pride and arrogance. He will take away your power to do harm to people, and your influence to cause them trouble. He is going to remove your dreadful leadership among people. As it says in Hebrew: “He will hurt your head.” But you are going to attack him using dirty tricks. You are going to fight him with lies and excuses and cheating. You will tackle him by means of bullying and mocking and insulting his people. As it says in Hebrew: “You will hurt his heel.”

¹crawling around on your belly: It is possible that the snake was not only able to rise up as a cobra can, but could also move around with its head high above the ground. But after being punished by God it would move about only by lowering its head to ground level. When people are cursed or punished by God it means that they will be embarrassed or ashamed of themselves. One sees this when suspects charged with a crime hide their faces when they are brought to court.

²bite the dust: To “bite the dust” means to lose and be humiliated. People hate this.

³**cursed:** To be cursed means to be an enemy of God. Anyone who is cursed will be punished. He or she will end up being lonely and silent because no one wants them. That's an awful punishment. It drives people mad. Being cursed will ruin and destroy them. To be cursed is the exact opposite of to be blessed. Blessed means to be God's friend and get his support. We shall end up happy and with good friends and everlasting life.

⁴**I shall bring war between you and the woman:** God could not let the devil, who used the snake, get away with the harm that it had done. The devil had tried to break down the friendship between God and the people he had made. If that friendship broke down, Adam and Eve would die. If a friendship breaks down, or we lose a friend, it is very painful. If we lose our friendship with God we lose everything. We lose our life. So when an enemy tries to destroy a good friendship, and people's lives, it is time to declare war on that evil enemy.

⁵**your offspring and her offspring:** This is where a single word in the Bible becomes very important. What is meant by the word, "offspring?" The word in Hebrew is "seed." A seed will produce another plant just like the original one. So, offspring, or seed, means a child or grandchild, or what we call a direct descendent. The Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, speaks about this word here in Genesis. In his letter to the Galatians, chapter 3, Paul points out that we must understand that it says a seed, not seeds. That means someone, someone special. By punishing the snake God was telling the devil that a certain chosen person was going to go to war against him. That person would fight the devil for the sake of all God's people. Paul tells us that it would be Jesus Christ, the Son of God and descendent of Eve - a real, true man.

**Jesus came to
make it possible for
us to obey God and
do what is right,
and live together
in peace, with love.**

What is the war between Christ and the devil about? They are fighting for the souls of people. Paul tells us in Galatians 3 that the devil has succeeded in getting everyone to fail to live up to God's standards. The devil has also caused a lot of fighting and arguing and unpleasantness among us all. Christ came to tackle this. He came to make it possible for us to obey God and do what is right, and live together in peace, with love. He fought the devil to make us good, and to get us to be good to one another. Eve and Adam would be punished, but a Messiah, their descendent, was going to save the human race.

3.16-20 GOD PUNISHES EVE AND ADAM

To the woman God said: I have taken the decision to make it difficult and painful for you to have children. Yet you will still want your husband to give you children. He will have to look after you and be your leader.

To Adam God said: Because you listened to what your wife had to say, and gave in to her, and ate from the tree that I ordered you not to, you will be punished. It is going to be painful and a strain for you to grow food from the ground. To have enough to eat, you are going to have to work hard for the whole of your life.

The ground will make plenty of difficulties for you by producing prickly thorns and lots of weeds. But you are going to need to eat the crops of the fields.

In order to get food to eat you are going to have to work hard. You will work until you sweat. You will have to go on doing this until you die. When you die you will return to the ground because you were originally taken from the ground. You were made of dust, and you will go back to the dust.

So the man took responsibility for his wife and named her Eve. He called her that because she was the mother of all human beings. Her Hebrew name is ¹Chavvah, which means “Life” [chav-vah, ch as in loch]. She is the mother of all people who have life. We translate Chavvah into English as Eve.

¹Chavvah [chav-vah, ch as in loch], **which means “Life”**: Adam had listened carefully to God when he punished the snake. Adam understood that one of their descendents was going to go to war with the devil in order to save human beings, even though they had sinned against God. So he realised that two things would happen to people: they would die, BUT they would ALSO live. That is why he gave Eve a hopeful name, not a hopeless one.

At the same time Adam realised that he must be responsible for Eve in future. He must look after her, and be a good leader for her.

God knows how to punish us in such a way that good comes of it.

3.21-24 GOD EXPELS MAN FROM THE GARDEN

Then the Lord God made clothes out of ¹animal skins for Adam and his wife to wear.

The Lord God said: What has now happened is that man has become like ²one of us. He has learnt to know what is good as well as what is bad. Since he has discovered this it is important that he does not help himself to the fruit from the Tree of Life. If he eats that then he shall live forever.

So the Lord God ordered man to leave the Garden of Eden. He had to go and work with the soil from which he had originally been taken.

In that way God expelled the man. He then put ³a special guard from heaven outside the garden, with a shiny and threatening sword. This dangerous weapon was used to patrol the whole area in order to protect the way to ⁴the Tree of Life.

¹animal skins: Animal skins are amazing. We usually call their skins, leather. Leather is very useful in all sorts of ways. It is tough and strong. It can bend often without breaking and does not easily tear. It is long lasting. It protects animals from heat and cold, and from many sorts of injuries. Leather is an excellent form of covering. An animal's skin stays with the animal for life. It is water-proof. Leather clothing is top quality. These skins would have solved Adam and Eve's problem of being naked. The fig-leaves that they made for themselves would have been of no use. When we try to cover up our mistakes or faults, we don't do any good. We cannot get rid of our conscience. But when God sorts our sins out, he deals with them well and permanently. God can even take the bitterness out of our conscience. God can wipe out and get rid of our guilt and shame.

Of course, it is likely that in order to get these skins, some animals would have had to die. So the animal dies in order to solve a problem for man. This is the basic idea of sacrifice: It is that one creature suffers in order to help another. Sacrifice is the way to sort out sin.

Sacrifice is the only way to get rid of sin, and to free us from sin and the trouble it causes.

²one of us: Why does God say, "One of us?" Who was he talking to?

First of all we must realise that Hebrew is a different language from ours. Different languages say things differently. Sometimes the English translation does not mean exactly the same as what the Hebrew means.

God was talking to himself. But we know that God's Spirit was with God in the creation. The Bible will tell us that the Holy Spirit is also God. Later on the Bible will also tell us that God's Son was also with God at creation. God's Son is God. Father and Holy Spirit and Son, together, IS God. "One of us" could also mean that Father, Holy Spirit and Son ARE God.

3a special guard from heaven: In Hebrew this is called a cherub [in Hebrew k'roov. In English you have one cherub and two cherubs. But in Hebrew it is one k'roov but two k'roo-veem, which we call cherubim.]

A cherub is difficult to explain. It is a creature in heaven, but not the same as an angel. It is an extremely powerful creature, with a body something like a bull, yet with a human head. It has four huge wings on its back. It is said to be as powerful as a lion, as strong as a bull, as sharp-sighted as an eagle, and as intelligent as a human. Sometimes it has the four heads of these four great creatures. The basic idea of cherubim in ancient times was that they formed a picture of a sort of palace guard for the greatest of kings. Cherubim were carved in the walls and surrounded the carvings of the great rulers. However, in the Bible they are real, not just carvings on walls. They surround the throne of God. They are awesome because God is awesome!

4the Tree of Life: This tree contained the secret of life. If one kept on eating its fruit, one would go on and on living permanently. It would stop one from ever getting old. God did not destroy the idea of that tree. Although the tree became extinct because of man's sin, it re-appears in the New Testament. The Tree of Life is waiting for us in heaven. There we shall be able to eat its fruit and live forever. Praise God for that! What a blessing! What a marvellous, glorious hope!

This is why Jesus said, "You have to eat me." He is the Tree of Life. Whoever asks Jesus into his heart and life, and repents of his sins, shall live forever. This applies to anyone and everyone. People who don't believe Jesus cannot understand this.

So, although Genesis chapter 3 is all about how man came to have to die, the last word in the chapter, in both English and Hebrew, is the idea of LIFE! Eve! Chavvah!

The most important thing about the Garden of Eden was the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life tells us two things that are important about God and important to us:

- **The one thing is that when God made man it was possible for people to live forever.** All they had to do was to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life.
- **The other thing is that if anyone thinks for a moment that the devil could outwit God and ruin all God's plans,** then that person is ignorant and must think again. God made man to live, and not even the devil is going to ruin God's plans.

But the Tree of Life was not able to work because man decided to eat from the wrong tree. That was the tree of getting to know not only what is good but also what is wrong and bad. So God organised another plan. He sent his Son into our world. He is the true Tree of Life. God's Son first had to sort out man's mistake and sin. Then he went back to heaven to prepare it for us. Heaven will include another Tree of Life, as we read in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. What is more, there will be no danger from any other tree because God will have separated heaven from hell, and good from bad, forever. What is bad will never again upset what is good. There will be no more lies and no more death in heaven, and no more tragic mistakes or suffering or sadness. Never ever!

God made man to live.

God made man to be his friends forever.





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*(Further volumes 9 to 12 are to be planned, researched and written, God willing.)



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