

LESSON 2 History of the Human Race

In the opening pages of Genesis God has given us a record of the beginning of the world, the universe, and everything that these contain. The events described are of great interest and significance to people everywhere, and they have had far-reaching consequences for all humanity.

This lesson deals with material from chapters 1–11 of Genesis. In these chapters we meet some of the most important characters and personalities of the Bible: Adam, Eve, Satan, Noah, Shem, and Abraham. We read, too, about some of the most fateful events of human history: the creation of man and his fall into sin, the destruction of the sinful human race by the Flood, and the selection of a godly family through whom God would bring about His purpose for humankind.

As you study this lesson you will learn about these characters and events and find answers to many questions about the origin of the world and of the people of God, to whom we belong.

lesson outline

Beginnings in Genesis

The Great Human Tragedy

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Tell of various beginnings described in Genesis.
- Identify truths concerning the revelation of God shown in Genesis.
- Describe God's original purpose for humanity.
- Discuss the impact of the Fall.
- State the spiritual lessons seen in the lives of Cain, Abel, and Seth.
- Indicate truths concerning the Flood.
- Identify facts associated with the settlement of Noah's descendants.

learning activities

1. Read Genesis 1–11 in your Bible.
2. Study each part of the lesson development, answering the questions and checking your answers. Be sure to pay special attention to the maps and diagrams given. Take the self-test and check your answers.

key words

altar
civilization
covenant

crucial
fertile crescent
geographical

origin
redemption

lesson development

BEGINNINGS IN GENESIS

Objective 1. *Tell of various beginnings described in Genesis.*

Genesis is a Greek word meaning “beginning or origin.” It is certainly a suitable name for the first book of the Bible, for the book of Genesis tells us of the beginning of everything except God himself who is without beginning or end. Genesis satisfies humanity’s natural curiosity about the past and how the world came to be. As Christians we accept its record as the only authentic account of God’s creation of the universe and His purpose for it. The further revelation of God to man is built upon the foundation formed by the events and truths it records. There are, for example, more than 60 quotations from Genesis in 17 different books of the New Testament.

Application

1 Match the following Scripture portions (left side) to the beginning each one describes (right side).

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ... a Genesis 1:1–25 | 1) Family |
| ... b Genesis 1:26–31 | 2) Nations of the world |
| ... c Genesis 3:1–7 | 3) World |
| ... d Genesis 3:8–24 | 4) Civilization |
| ... e Genesis 4:1–15 | 5) Human race |
| ... f Genesis 4:16–9:29 | 6) Sin |
| ... g Genesis 10–11 | 7) Redemption |

The Genesis God

Objective 2. *Identify truths concerning the revelation of God shown in Genesis.*

Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God . . .” Who then is God? In Genesis He reveals himself as the divine Creator, the

one who has always existed from eternity to eternity. He has no beginning of days nor end of life. And although He created all things, He exists separate from all things. The trees are God's handiwork, but God is not a tree. God created the sun, but the sun is not God.

Application

2 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a)** Genesis tells us about God's beginning.
 - b)** The creation is separate from God.
 - c)** God is shown in Genesis as the Creator.
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The Genesis Event

Three times in Genesis 1 the word create appears (1:1, 27). This word is used to translate a Hebrew word which means to "make something out of nothing." The fact that God made the world out of nothing is an indication that He has all power. When we understand this idea we have taken the first important step towards understanding our relationship to God. The Bible teaches us that it is by faith that we can know God created the world. Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

This belief in God's Word is the basis of a person's relationship to God and of his or her Christian experience. Without such faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). As Christians, we must rely on God's Word, not on our frail and partial human knowledge.

It is far more important to understand that God created everything than to have an opinion on exactly where or when the events of creation took place. The author of Genesis, for example, gives no timetable for the events. He does not suggest a date. Neither does he give exact geographical details about the garden of Eden, man's first dwelling place. These matters are not dealt with. Nevertheless, the important central truth is

clear: God created the world from nothing, and His work of creation was characterized by purpose, design, and order. This truth is the foundation and background for the rest of God's revelation which is gradually unfolded in the Bible.

Application

3 The importance of the Genesis account of creation is that it states

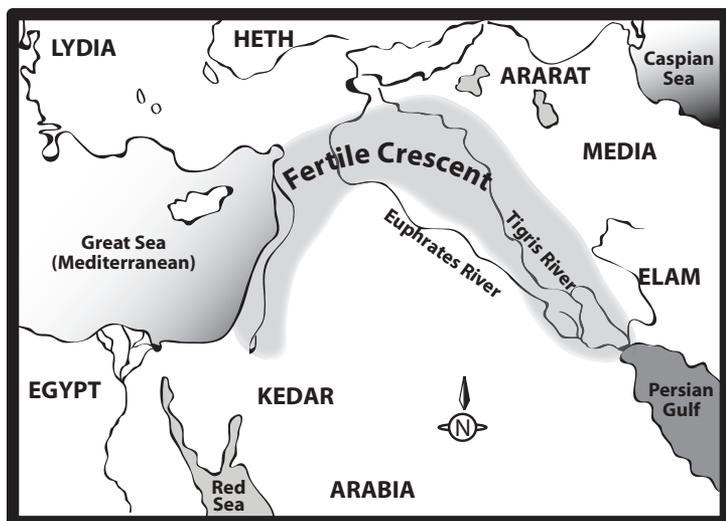
- a) the date when God created the world.
 - b) God created the world by His word.
 - c) exact geographical details about Eden.
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Man—God's Masterpiece

Objective 3. *Describe God's original purpose for humanity.*

After giving an account of the origin of the heavens and the earth, the opening chapters of Genesis quickly move to a description of man. Man is clearly the most important being of God's entire creation. Made in the very image or likeness of God, he becomes the center of interest in the revelation of God's purpose.

Man was given both responsibility for and power over creation. God intended that man should rule it (Genesis 1:26, 28). He placed man in a garden in Eden. Man was different from the animals. This difference is made clear by the events described in Genesis 2:18–23. Man could find no satisfactory companion until God created Eve from Adam's own body. This was perfection—an animal and plant kingdom in perfect harmony with humanity. And God was very pleased!



Application

- 4** Read Genesis 2:10–14. On the map above, find the rivers that are mentioned. Notice the shaded areas. This is called the fertile crescent because of its shape and suitability for growing crops. Many people who study history, including non-Christians, believe that life began there. Circle the letter of each statement following that is TRUE.
- Ararat is north of the fertile crescent.
 - Only one of the rivers named in Genesis 2:10–14 is near the fertile crescent.
 - There are non-Christians who believe that life began in the area called the fertile crescent.

God wanted man to rule over creation, but He also wanted him to have fellowship with Him. There was perfect order in creation, but within man's being was a powerful force—his will. Initially, the first two humans, Adam and Eve, chose to have fellowship with their Creator (Genesis 3:8). What a wonderful time that must have been! But for humans and God to have true, lasting fellowship, people must freely choose it.

God had given humans freedom of choice. He wanted people to love Him because they chose to do so. The rest of creation—the stars, the sun, the trees—has no freedom of choice. It must move according to its design. But God wanted human beings to freely choose to do His will and to delight in doing so.

Application

5 In your notebook, describe God’s two main purposes for humankind. Write one short sentence for each description.



THE GREAT HUMAN TRAGEDY

The Fall and Its Shadow

Objective 4. *Discuss the impact of the Fall.*

Adam and Eve’s disobedience, which is described in Genesis 3:1–7, is referred to as the Fall. We have already found out what God’s original purpose was for humankind. It was from this height that humans fell.

As the events of Genesis 3 unfold we find Adam and Eve in the Garden. They had complete freedom of choice. But there was another personality present also—Satan. He too had been created for a high purpose. But he had rebelled against God and lost his place (Luke 10:18), and now he attempted to cause God’s plan to fail, to draw humans into his own rebellion. He tempted Adam and Eve to use their self-will against God’s will. The specific issue was God’s command concerning a tree in the midst of the Garden.

Application

6 Read Genesis 2:8–17. In your notebook, answer the following questions.

- a)** How was the tree described?
 - b)** What was God’s command concerning it?
-
- 

Do not think it strange that the only test involved a tree and fruit. God often tests our obedience by using simple, everyday things. Satan came to Eve in the form of a serpent. Both Adam and Eve failed the test. This failure and disobedience brought about the most crucial change in man's relationship to God. It is the most tragic event in the history of the human race and is referred to repeatedly throughout the Bible (see Romans 5:12, 18–19).

Application

7 Read Genesis 3:1–24. Put the events below in order by numbering them from 1 to 6. Write 1 before the event that happened first, 2 before the event that happened next, and so forth.

- ... **a** Eve listened to Satan and disobeyed God's command.
 - ... **b** God gave Adam and Eve a command about the tree.
 - ... **c** Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden.
 - ... **d** Adam ate of the fruit which was forbidden.
 - ... **e** Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves.
 - ... **f** God provided a covering for Adam and Eve.
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Let us take a closer look at what actually happened when Adam and Eve sinned. Their action is an example of a pattern we find in the New Testament. This pattern is that we try in the wrong way to satisfy three normal desires God has given us: the desire to possess things, enjoy things, and achieve or attain. In 1 John 2:16 the satisfaction of these three desires outside of God's will is identified as 1) what the sinful self desires, 2) what people see and want, and 3) worldly pride or boasting.

Application

8 Write the phrase from Genesis 3:6 which corresponds to each of these desires below the description of it.

a) Possess things: what the sinful self desires

.....

b) Enjoy things: what people see and want

.....

c) Achieve or attain: worldly pride or boasting

.....



And so our first parents joined Satan in rebellion against God's commands. Immediately, they became conscious of themselves and of their being lost. So they hid from God's holy presence and used leaves to cover their nakedness (Genesis 3:7). The Lord God, later, killed an animal and made clothes from the animal skins for them.

Adam and Eve's spiritual life died as God had said, and their physical bodies came under the threat of death. They were cut off from God— orphaned. Thus, the first humans chose to step down from God's fellowship to Satan's control. From the height of God's purpose they fell into the depths of bondage.

Application

9 Read Psalm 8:4–9 and Hebrews 2:8. Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement below.

a) God's purpose was for humankind to rule all things.

b) Man is ruler over all things now.

c) All human beings are fulfilling God's purpose today.



God judged everyone who participated in the Fall. The serpent was judged above all animals (Genesis 3:14). Women and men were made subject to suffering, hard toil, and physical death. The story ends with the first humans being exiled from the blissful Garden (Genesis 3:22–24).

When God gave humans freedom of choice, He knew there was a danger that every person would turn from good to evil. But though He knew the ultimate possibilities, He still chose that path. Some people have been tempted to wonder if God's purpose has failed, for they look at a world filled with the consequences of sin. But God's plans cannot fail (Isaiah 46:10). He would have never created the world if the gain of His salvation would not far surpass the loss brought about by people's disobedience. God saw that some would make a deliberate choice to reject His deliverance. This truth convinces us of how wonderful the future will be for those who do accept His salvation.

God promised ultimate victory through the woman's offspring (Genesis 3:15). This was a prophecy about Christ, who would come to redeem humanity. Isn't it wonderful that the Christian who overcomes will one day eat of that tree of life? Revelation 2:7 tells us that "the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" will be given to those who win the victory. What a promise this is to those who choose to live for God and refuse to follow the advice of Satan or to join in his rebellion!

The apostle Paul writes "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments?" (Romans 11:33). God's purposes will not be defeated. One day uncountable multitudes from every nation, people, and language, will sing the song of salvation (Revelation 7:9–12). The eternal purpose of the true God will come to pass!

Application

10 Circle the letter in front of each statement which describes a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience.

- a)** Adam and Eve continued to have close fellowship with God.
 - b)** Mankind was subjected to physical death.
 - c)** Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden.
 - d)** God's purpose for humankind failed.
 - e)** Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat of the tree of life.
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Descendants and Destruction

Cain, Abel, and Seth

Objective 5. *State the spiritual lessons seen in the lives of Cain, Abel, and Seth.*

Adam and Eve had three sons mentioned in the Bible by name—Cain, Abel, and Seth. The story of Cain and Abel given in Genesis 4 particularly illustrates the condition of humankind following Adam and Eve’s sin. Both Cain and Abel worshipped God by bringing an offering. Abel’s animal sacrifice was accepted by God, but Cain’s offering of vegetable produce was rejected.

These offerings by Cain and Abel early in Bible history echoed the experience of their parents, Adam and Eve. As Adam and Eve had tried to clothe their nakedness and sin by their own efforts, so Cain brought an offering to God of his own works. And as the Lord killed an animal and made coverings for Adam and Eve, so Abel brought an animal sacrifice. In these early events God revealed an important principle: To cover sin there must be blood shed, either death of the sinner or death of a substitute for the sinner.

From Adam, Cain, and onwards, God points forward to the cross of Jesus Christ, for God made it clear that the Savior who had been promised would have to die to pay the penalty for humanity’s sins. Every animal sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed ahead to Jesus as the true lamb of God (John 1:29). The sacrifices pictured the death Jesus would suffer to remove sin.

Cain and Abel represent possible attitudes of two groups of people. One group sees no need for a Savior. They feel sufficient in their own goodness. The other group knows that they will be lost unless they accept the sacrifice God has provided for their sin and trust Him for their salvation.

Application

11 God accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected Cain's. In your notebook, describe in your own words the spiritual principle this teaches us.

Cain displayed an attitude of deliberate disobedience since God had warned him that sin would try to master him (Genesis 4:7). He murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4:8) and was driven off the land away from the Lord's presence (Genesis 4:14).

Genesis 4:17–24 describes the history of Cain and his descendants. They built cities, made tools, and raised livestock. This was the beginning of civilization. The events and the activities described in these verses took place over a long period of time. The civilization which was developed provided a false sense of security, as shown by the boast of Lamech (Genesis 4:23–24), one of Cain's descendants.

While Cain and his descendants were building their civilization, Adam and Eve had another son of whom Eve said, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him" (Genesis 4:25). Abel was a godly man. If he had lived, one of his descendants may have been the Savior God had promised. His murder was Satan's attempt to destroy this possibility. But God gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth, through whom God would fulfill His promise. During the lifetime of Seth's son, Enosh, people began to worship using the Lord's name (Genesis 4:26).

For God's plan of redemption to be carried out, there had to be a human line of ancestry from which the Savior could come. It was necessary for God to become a man so He could offer His life in payment to restore humanity's broken relationship with himself. Seth proved worthy to head this line of ancestors of the coming Savior.

Application

12 The importance of Seth in God’s plan to restore humanity’s broken relationship with Him is that Seth

- a) did not experience death.
- b) was to be Christ’s human ancestor.
- c) could pay for man’s sin.

13 Compare Genesis 5 to Luke 3:36–38. Eleven of Jesus’ earthly ancestors are mentioned in both these passages, counting the ones from Adam to Shem. In your notebook, write down the names of these ancestors in order. Begin with Adam as number 1, and end with Shem as number 11.

The Flood

Objective 6. *Indicate truths concerning the Flood.*

In your list of Jesus’ earthly ancestors you named Enoch. Notice how his life is described in Genesis 5:21–24. Compare this description to the one in Hebrews 11:5–6. Enoch did not experience death! He lived in fellowship with God and his life had a special ending. God took him away!

The grandson of Enoch was named Lamech, and Lamech’s son was Noah. During Noah’s days godlessness increased as violence, wickedness, and corruption abounded. God determined to destroy all the wicked. But God was pleased with Noah. For 120 years God warned everyone through Noah that He was going to destroy the world with a flood. Still only Noah found favor in God’s eyes and kept an acceptable relationship with Him.

God commanded Noah to build a large *ark*. Noah obeyed, building it to the exact proportions God gave him. Scientists today would agree that a boat like the one Noah built would be seaworthy and would have room enough for all the life that was to be spared. In building the ark, Noah exercised faith in the words of God. Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith, Noah when

warned of things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.”

Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, and a representation of every kind of animal and bird life went into the ark as God had commanded. God then sent the Flood. The world was judged by God, and the sinful human race was destroyed. For about a year, Noah and his family and all of the creatures that had been saved had to stay in the ark. Then the waters receded and humankind faced a new opportunity.

Application

14 Read the account of the Flood in Genesis 6–8. Then circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement below.

- a) It was by faith that Noah believed God’s warning.
 - b) Noah tried to change God’s mind regarding the flood.
 - c) Noah showed his faith in God by building the ark.
-

Beginning Again

Objective 7. *Identify facts associated with the settlement of Noah’s descendants.*

Noah began the new civilization by building an altar and offering many sacrifices. God then made a covenant or promise with Noah concerning the future of His relationship with humankind. God’s action shows us what was His ultimate purpose for judging the world—to restore its relationship with Him.

Application

15 Read Genesis 9 and answer these questions in your notebook.

- a) What was God’s promise (vv. 8–11)?
 - b) What was God’s sign (vv. 12–17)?
-

After Noah and his family became settled in the land an incident occurred which is described in Genesis 9:20–27. This incident shows us that even a righteous man like Noah could be tempted and sin. It also reveals the character of Noah’s three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham treated his father with disrespect, while Shem and Japheth acted in respect. It was upon Canaan, Ham’s son, that the curse of Noah’s prophecy fell (vv. 25–27). Centuries later the united Canaanites received terrible judgment when the Israelites occupied their land.

Genesis 10:1–32 is a description of where the descendants of Noah’s sons settled. Today, scientists who study the history of humans are finding more evidences that this description is correct. It is the only adequate explanation we have of how people came to live where they do throughout the world.

The following chart lists the three sons of Noah, their sons, and several of the nations which came from their descendants.

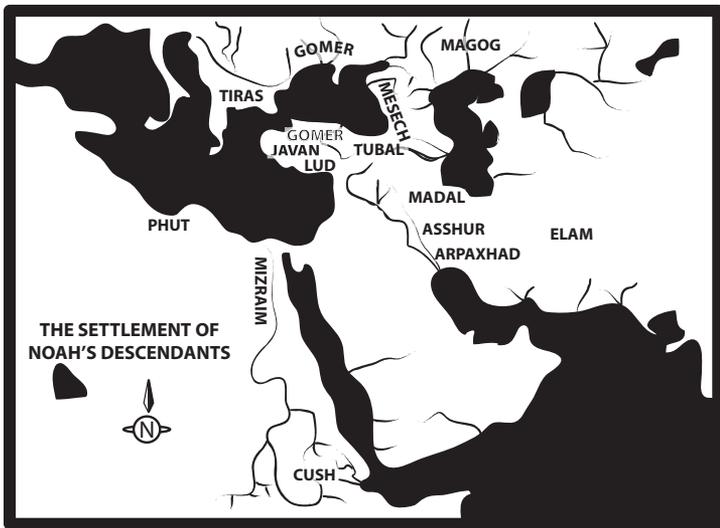
THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH AND THEIR NATIONS		
		–Gomer (Celts) –Magog (Scythians)
	JAPHETH (Aryan Race)	–Madai (Medes) –Javan (Greeks) –Tubal –Mesech –Tiras (Thracians) –Cush (Ethiopia)
NOAH	HAM (Turanian Race)	–Mizraim (Egypt) –Phut (Libya) –Canaan (Palestine) –Elam (Elamites)
	SHEM (Semitic Race)	–Asshur (Assyrians) –Arphaxad (Chaldeans) –Lud (Lydians) –Aram (Syrians)

The sons of Japheth settled in the area of the Black and Caspian Seas all the way west to Spain (Genesis 10:2–5). It is likely that the Greek and Germanic peoples descended from him.

Three of Ham's sons went into Africa (vs. 6–14). Later they spread northward to Shinar and Assyria. They built cities like Nineveh, Babel, and Accad (also spelled Akkad). Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, settled along the Mediterranean, extending from Sidon to Gerar near Gaza. The Canaanites used a language similar to the descendants of Shem although they were descendants of Ham.

The descendants of Shem occupied the area north of the Persian Gulf (vv. 21–31). They were also known as the Semites or the Semitic race. Elam, Asshur, and Aram are names associated with the Semites.

The following map shows the general area in which the descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem settled.



Application

16 What was God's ultimate reason for judging the world by the Flood?

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17 Review the chart, map, and descriptions of where the descendants of Noah settled. Then match each son with the places and nations that are associated with him and his descendants. Write the number of the son in front of each place (a–i) and nation (j–r) associated with him.

... a Accad	... j Assyrians	1) Shem
... b Africa	... k Celts	2) Ham's sons
... c Aram	... l Chaldeans	3) Japheth
... d Asshur	... m Elamites	
... e Black Sea	... n Ethiopians	
... f Caspian Sea	... o Libya	
... g Nineveh	... p Medes	
... h Shinar	... q Palestine	
... i Spain	... r Scythians	

Abraham and His Descendants

The Holy Spirit now narrows our attention to the Semites (Genesis 11:10–32). We are given a ten-generation account beginning with the family of Shem and ending with the family of Terah, who migrated from the city of Ur to Haran. It is to this family that Abram (later called Abraham) belonged. Abraham is an example of a man who acted on the revelation of creation as described in Psalm 19. God kept His promise to Abraham and led him by faith.

Abraham's seed or descendants—both natural and spiritual—occupy the center of interest throughout the rest of the Bible. They are called the people of God.

Application

18 Abraham is of special importance in a study of the Old Testament because his descendants

- a)** were very numerous.
- b)** were called the Levites.
- c)** are the people of God.

self-test

- 1** The account of Creation given in Genesis is important because it tells us
 - a)** that God created the world from nothing.
 - b)** the year when Creation took place.
 - c)** where the Garden of Eden was located.

- 2** God wanted man to
 - a)** be free from responsibility.
 - b)** have dominion over creation.
 - c)** love God because he had to.

- 3** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement below.
 - a)** The Fall completely destroyed God's plans.
 - b)** Satan told Eve the truth.
 - c)** Only Adam and Eve were affected by the Fall.
 - d)** An animal had to die so Adam and Eve could be covered.

- 4** The spiritual lesson illustrated by God's response to the offerings brought by Cain and Abel is that
 - a)** God does not require offerings for sin.
 - b)** there is no way for sin to be covered.
 - c)** humans cannot cover sin by their own efforts.

- 5** Circle the letter in front of each statement which gives a correct description of the Fall.
 - a)** Adam and Eve were created different from the animals. They sinned because they wanted to have authority over them. This made it necessary for them to leave the Garden.
 - b)** Adam and Eve listened to Satan's suggestion to disobey God. Then they followed it, exercising their self-will to go against God's specific command.
 - c)** Adam and Eve had enjoyed fellowship with God. But then they became more interested in caring for the Garden than in spending time in God's presence.

6 Noah was not destroyed by the Flood because he

- a)** was just and walked with God.
- b)** was the son of a righteous man.
- c)** had several godly children.

7 The descendants of Shem settled in the area

- a)** of the Black and Caspian Seas.
- b)** of north Africa.
- c)** north of the Persian gulf.

8 List the following events in the order in which they occurred. Write 1 before the one that happened first, 2 before the one that happened next, and so forth.

- ... **a** Noah believed God's word and built the ark.
- ... **b** Adam and Eve followed Satan's advice.
- ... **c** Abel was murdered by his brother Cain.
- ... **d** God created the heavens and the earth.
- ... **e** Abraham was born.
- ... **f** God sent the Flood in judgment upon sinful mankind.
- ... **g** God gave man rulership and responsibility over creation.
- ... **h** God made a covenant with humankind with the rainbow as a sign.
- ... **i** Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden.

9 Circle the letter of each TRUE statement below.

- a)** Abraham belonged to the Semitic race.
- b)** Japheth was one of Abraham's ancestors.
- c)** Believers today belong to the people of God.

Answers To Study Questions

- 10 b)** Mankind was subjected to physical death.
c) Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden.
e) Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat of the tree of life.
- 1 a)** 3) World
b) 5) Human race
c) 6) Sin
d) 7) Redemption (Genesis 3:15 is regarded as a prophecy of Jesus Christ).
e) 1) Family
f) 4) Civilization
g) 2) Nations of the world
- 11** It teaches us that the only way sin can be covered is through death. Man's good efforts are not acceptable. (Your answer should be similar.)
- 2 a)** False
b) True
c) True
- 12 b)** was to be Christ's human ancestor.
- 3 b)** God created the world by His word.
- 13** **1)** Adam
2) Seth
3) Enosh
4) Kenan
5) Mahalaleel
6) Jared
7) Enoch
8) Methuselah
9) Lamech
10) Noah
11) Shem

- 4** a) True
b) False
c) True
- 14** a) True
b) False
c) True
- 5** God's two main purposes for mankind were these:
a) Mankind was to rule over creation, and
b) mankind was to have fellowship with God. (Your answers should be similar but can be listed in any order.)
- 15** a) God promised that He would never again destroy the world with a flood.
b) God's sign was the rainbow.
- 6** a) It was called the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.
b) God said that they were not to eat of its fruit.
- 16** God judged the world so that He could restore humankind's relationship with himself.
- 7** a) 2
b) 1
c) 6
d) 3
e) 4
f) 5

- 17 a** 2) Ham's sons
- b** 2) Ham's sons
- c** 1) Shem
- d** 1) Shem
- e** 3) Japheth
- f** 3) Japheth
- g** 2) Ham's sons
- h** 2) Ham's sons
- i** 3) Japheth
- j** 2) Ham's sons
- k** 3) Japheth
- l** 1) Shem
- m** 1) Shem
- n** 2) Ham's sons
- o** 2) Ham's sons
- p** 3) Japheth
- q** 2) Ham's sons
- r** 3) Japheth

8 Here is the way I would answer this question:

- a)** How good its fruit would be to eat.
- b)** How beautiful the tree was.
- c)** How wonderful it would be to become wise.
(Your answers should be similar.)

18 c) are the people of God.

- 9 a)** True
- b)** False
- c)** False