CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION BIBLE SURVEY

CWR/PTM

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

GENESIS Week 1

Before You Begin Your Journey...

Welcome again to the CWR Bible Survey!

The rich tapestry of stories found in the book of Genesis lay the foundation for all that follows in the Bible. It is difficult if not impossible to fully understand either Old or New Testaments without some grounding in the stories of Genesis.

This is especially true of the first 10 chapters. Regardless of the degree to which we take all these accounts literally or figuratively, they teach us basic and vital lessons about who God is, his power, his intent for all humanity, his patience, mercy and above all his amazing grace. We also learn about the nature of evil and human weakness—and how we so easily succumb to the same temptations as our original father and mother, Adam and Eve.

As we proceed, we learn how God works with the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We follow Abraham's journeys as he waits for God to fulfill his promises—promises which would not be fully realized until New Testament times.

In the great story arc of Scripture, Genesis sets up and defines the human problems of sin, death and separation from God. Millennia later, Jesus comes to complete the arc by vanquishing those problems once and for all on the cross—reconciling all humanity to himself (John 12:32)!

Hung altreated

Greg Albrecht President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. If you get behind, you can always catch up.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a new Bible. Plain Truth Ministries recommends the *New King James Study Bible* published by Thomas Nelson and the *New International Version Study Bible* published by Zondervan.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

•**Opening Up to the Word** — a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.

• **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.

•Living Out the Word—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

•**Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. the *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

8—Remember that while we may refer to the Bible as the word of God—the Eternal Word of God is noneother than Jesus, who inspired the Scriptures to be written by human instruments. Words on paper may tell us about him—but it is not the words that we worship—it is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	ISa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	IKi	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

•Abbreviations Used in Experiencing the Word—

GENESIS

The Book of Beginnings

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Introduction to Genesis

Authorship: The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) does not name its author. However, Hebrew and early Christian tradition has assumed Moses was the primary author and compiler of Genesis and most of the Pentateuch. Some sections show evidence of editorial updating (Nu 12:3; Dt 34; Ge 14:14 in the light of Jdg 18:19-30).

Date: It is not easy to assign a firm date to the writing of the book of Genesis. Among other things, this depends on the dating of the Exodus event, which is conservatively placed within the 15th century B.C. According to 1 Kings 6:1, the Exodus occurred 480 years before the fourth year of Solomon's reign, which we know began about 970 B.C. Assuming these 480 years to be approximate, this dates the Exodus at about 1446 B.C. By this assumption, the 40 years in the wilderness during which Moses would have compiled the Pentateuch material was probably between 1446 and 1406 B.C.

Setting and purpose: As suggested by its name (meaning "origin" or "beginnings"), this first book of the Bible describes many firsts and sets the stage for later literary and theological development elsewhere in the Bible. In the chapters of Genesis, we see the origins of essential things: the universe (ch. 1); the known world (ch. 1-2); the human race (ch. 1-2); work and labor (ch. 2-3); the family (ch 2, 4); sin and evil, death and judgment (ch. 3-7); the redemption of humanity by God's grace (ch. 3, 8); the nations (ch. 10); the covenant of promise (ch. 12, 15, 17); the nation of Israel (ch. 17).

This "Book of Beginnings" presents God as the Sovereign Creator of all; the Sustainer, Judge and Redeemer of the World; the faithful Father of a covenant people. We see God through the life experiences of Hebrew patriarchs who become the first people of the covenant. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who builds for himself a nation of 12 tribes, has a larger purpose—to bless all other nations.

The first major part of Genesis, called primeval history (ch.

1:1–11:26), sketches the period from Adam to Abraham. The cradle of human civilization is said to be the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley. The second major part of Genesis, called *patriarchal history* (ch. 11:27–50:26), sketches key events in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and their families; the setting for this period of development is largely Canaan (Palestine) and Egypt.

Distinctive features: Early Middle Eastern culture traditionally gave preference to the firstborn. But in Genesis, the firstborn almost always gets a short account, with a second or later son getting the lengthier treatment. God prefers Abel over firstborn Cain, he prefers Shem over Noah's firstborn Japheth, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph and Judah over their older brothers, Ephraim over Manasseh. To demonstrate that God's ways are higher than our ways, that mercy triumphs over judgment and that his grace reigns supreme, he defies human tradition and expectations.

The Book of Genesis is often included in "Bible as Literature" classes at secular schools because it ranks among the world's finest epic literature. Vivid figures of speech, climactic plot twists, *déjá vu* sequences between the generations, parallel structure between prose sections and other literary devices all lend a memorable quality and interpretive clues that signal the alert reader to pay attention.

Reading outline

Day	Text	Theme
1	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Story of Creation: Beginning with God
2-5	Genesis 2:4–5:32	Story of Adam: In the Image of God
6-7	Genesis 6:1-10:32	Story of Noah: Rebirth of Nations
8-15	Genesis 11:1–25:18	Story of Abraham: Renewal of Covenant
16-17	Genesis 25:19–28:9	Story of Isaac: Twins, a King, a Blessing
18-23	Genesis 28:10-36:43	Story of Jacob: Baby Boom, on the Run
24-30	Genesis 37:1-50:26	Story of Joseph: Pits to Prisons to Praise

"In the beginning God created the beavens and the earth." —Genesis 1:1

Artwork by Basil Wolverton

God Don't Make No Junk

Genesis 1:1-2:3

What hand-made creation of yours, or of your kids, are you most pleased with? What ingredients did you use? What was its purpose?

1. Note the various aspects of creation—its origin ("and God said... and it was so"), its design (three days of forming, followed by three days of filling), beauty, symmetry, diversity, inherent goodness, even the act of resting. What does each aspect tell you about God's nature and character?

2. Does the language of creation here in Genesis tell you more about the how and when—or the who and why of creation?

3. On Day Six, what was made and why? **4.** What does it mean to be made in God's image or likeness? That is, in what ways are we like God (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10)? In what ways are we obviously not like God (Ro 1:20; Ac 17:24-31)?

Which do you find more believable: that God created the heavens and the earth by his spoken word or that the universe simply happened? Why?
 Pantheists equate God with the creation and believe that everything is divine. *Atheists* believe there is no god. *Polytheists* believe there are many gods. *Monotheists* believe there is only one true God who is sovereign. What arguments for monotheism do you see in Genesis 1?
 How does God rest? How does God work?

Day (vs. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2) has been interpreted literally by some as a 24-hour period and figuratively by others as an indefinite time frame—even millions of years. The Hebrew word for day can refer to a span of time. The Bible does not insist on either perspective. **Let us... our image** (v. 26). The plural form of God may convey the majestic or royal **we** that kings (and editors) use; it may refer to a divine council including angels; or it may refer to the Trinity—one God who is speaking as three divine Persons (Mt 28:19; Mk 3:29; Jn 1:1; Jn 14:16, 17; 2Cor 13:14; Col 1:15; Heb 1:2).

DAY 1

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

BEYOND THE REACH OF SCIENCE

e should be careful not to overstep the purpose of the Genesis account by reading it as a scientific treatise on creation.

Genesis 1 is not a 20th-century science book. I'm not arguing that God couldn't have given us one if He'd wanted to. In fact, if He had chosen to inspire a scientific treatise I have no doubt that He would have given us one that battalions of Einsteins would need millennia to unravel.

Moses, however, wrote his account of creation in an age that didn't even know there were other planets in the sky or other continents on the far side of the globe. The concept of zero was unknown, the germ theory of disease was still 3,000 years in the future and the best doctors of the day mixed magic spells with their nostrums, unsure which was more effective.

In that world, what scientific language would God use to explain creation? It would certainly be different from what He would give us today. And if God used scientific language accurate in the 1990s, how long would it be before that knowledge had gone the way of other older theories and language?

No description of creation in scientific language can be timeless. No timeless description of creation can be scientific. To tell us the timeless truth of creation, the revelation had to be something more than a scientific treatise.

In timeless, nonscientific language, He told us where we came from, what our place in the order of creation was to be and why our human experience is so ringed by pain and effort. He laid to rest all the false gods of ancient man and undercut the prideful curiosity and the curiously misplaced pride of modern man. He carefully chose not to burden His revelation with scientific language that would rapidly find itself outdated.

Genesis tells us that God spoke creation into existence, but apart from the creative power of the Word of God, the mechanism of creation is both unexplained and unmentioned. There is no mention of atoms, galaxies, the nature of light or the laws of genetics. It is important that we know God created, but apparently it is not important that we know how.

In the past hundred years, many have tried to establish linkages between the spare, beautiful account of Genesis 1 and the emerging details of what are still infant sciences. The best of these disturb me, for one simple reason. It has been tried before and the results have always been disastrous.

For centuries the church insisted the Bible taught a geocentric (earth-centered) universe. Theologians quoted every verse in the Bible that talked about the sun rising and setting as proof of the "scientific" theory. Today, no informed Christian would argue that the sun revolves around the earth. There have been too many satellites, space probes and shuttle launches for us to hold on to that outmoded idea.

The theory had to be abandoned in the face of clear-cut evidence against it. Unfortunately, when that particular theory had to be abandoned, the biblical passages that "taught" it were abandoned with it.

It is a monumental blunder when we support a questionable biblical interpretation with questionable science, but an even more incredible blunder when we adopt a scientific world view as "biblical" and then use Scripture to support it.

Tragically, that is exactly what the church had done. Because Christians had twisted Scripture to support an untrue scientific world view, the credibility of Scripture was destroyed for many when the world view was proven false.



The conflict between the Bible and science was born out of the misguided Christian desire to wed the truth of Scripture to the theories of science. And it continues to be a danger for Christians who rush to find biblical evidence for every new theory or to create new pseudo-scientific theories on the basis of particular schools of interpretation.

The minute we tie Scripture to a particular scientific world view, it shackles the timeless absolutes of God's Word to the changing, uncertain voice of man.

Even when the voice comes from

Christianity's most brilliant scientific spokespersons, by the very nature of science it can only speak tentatively, knowing that today's certainty can become tomorrow's old wives' tale.

The task of science is to discover what is, as God's ordered creation defines it. The task of Scripture is to tell us about the truths that lie beyond the reach of scientific experimentation. —David E. O'Brien

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DAY 2

The Original Match-Maker

Genesis 2:4-25

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

Have you ever met anyone that made you think you were meant for each other?

1. What new ideas does this second creation story introduce?

2. Why put a tree in the garden and then forbid the man to eat from it (vs. 9, 15-17)?

3. God put Adam in the garden for what reason(s)? How do you suppose this first zoologist came up with names for all the livestock, birds and wild beasts?

4. Since there was no helper suitable for Adam in all of creation, God created one for this specific purpose. Both male and female express God's image (vs. 18-23; 1:27). What does that tell you about human (in)compatibility and the desire for a mate?

5. Why was there no shame associated with nakedness for this couple (Ge 2:25)?

6. Beyond the physical act, what are the social, moral and spiritual implications of becoming "one flesh" (v. 24; Mt 19:5-6; Mk 10:7-9; 1Co 6:16-17; Eph 5:31-32).

LIVING

out the Word

Are you now or have you been a "suitable helper" for someone else to partner with and receive strength from?

WINDOW

on the Word

The Hebrew word translated **account** in the NIV or **generations** in the KJV, (v. 4), means "the story of how something or someone came into being." It occurs ten times in Genesis introducing each of ten main sections of history. The Hebrew for **man** (v. 7) is also the name Adam (v. 20) and is related to "ground" (Hebrew, adamah). The **trees** (vs. 9, 16-17) in this story may be real as well as symbolic. Access to the "tree of life" shows that life eternal, without death, was God's original intention and ultimate destiny for humanity (see Rev 22, where the tree of life reappears). The Hebrew word translated **suitable helper** (vs. 18, 20) is also used to describe God as a source of strength (Ps 115:9-11; Isa 41:10; Hos 13:9) and does not imply a subordinate role.

"Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man." —Genesis 2:22

"You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman." —Genesis 3:4

Photo by Barry Stahl

Caught in the Act

Genesis 3:1-24

Which excuse(s) have you recently used to coverup a wrong-doing? (a) no harm, no foul; (b) no one told me the rules; (c) I couldn't help it; (d) all my friends do it; (e) the devil made me do it; (f) I was raised that way. Expand on one of these excuses.

1. Who is the clever serpent (v. 1; Rev 12:9; 20:2)? How could Satan get Eve to go against God's command? What human weaknesses was Satan exploiting?

2. In what respect was Satan actually telling the truth (vs. 5, 22)?

3. Was Adam more blameworthy or less, compared to Eve in eating the forbidden fruit?

4. What curse is pronounced on the serpent (vs. 14-15)? On Eve (v. 16)? On Adam (vs. 17-19)? On both (vs. 22-24)?

5. The first sin results in a death sentence and cuts sinners off from God's gift of eternal life (v. 22; Ro 6:23), yet God's mercy and grace prevails. Where do you see mercy in this story and its NT counterpart (vs. 15, 17-19, 21-22; Ro 5:12-19)? How do you explain the relative impact of the first Adam and the second Adam?

1. God still asks, "Where are you?" in relation to him. Which answers describe you: (a) naked with no shame, (b) doing penance, (c) trying to achieve your own salvation, (d) feeling rejected, (e) glad to be alive, (f) clothed with God's gracious provision, (g) lost.

2. What are you afraid of, ashamed of, running from or blaming others for?

3. Does God guard the way to the Tree of Life today?

Adam's fall from grace led to banishment from paradise. The apostle Paul said that Adam was a pattern or type of Christ, whose obedience had the reverse impact on the course of human history as that of Adam's disobedience (v. 22; Ro 5:12-19).



OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

LIVING out the Word

window on the Word

DAY 4

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

Genesis 4:1-26

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word Have you ever been passed up for an award you worked hard for and thought you deserved?

1. Why did God reject Cain's offering but accept Abel's (vs. 2-5; Heb 11:4)? (a) one was of plant life, the other of animal life; (b) one was offered in faith, the other not; (c) Cain felt that he deserved God's favor, Abel did not; (d) one cost next to nothing, the other was a costly sacrifice; (e) God played favorites, preferring ranchers over farmers.

2. Murder resulted because of Cain's anger. How should Cain have reacted?

3. If Abel's faith was evident to and accepted by God (Heb 11:4), what demonstrated Cain's lack of faith?

4. Cain murders Abel with anger, jealousy, deception, malice aforethought and callous indifference. Yet God did not insist on the death penalty. Why not? What was so unbearable about the punishment Cain did receive (vs. 10-14)?

5. How does building a city, or permanent settlement, compare to the curse given Cain? What other legacy does Cain have?

LIVING

out the Word

1. Does God's way of dealing with the murderous, impenitent Cain raise any other questions for you? Would you call for more mercy or more justice?

2. When has God shown you favor (grace) in spite of what you have done? What have you done with God's favor (grace) even though you didn't deserve it?

window on the Word **Cain's brother's blood** cries out, like a prophet's (Lk 11:50-51; Heb 11:4), but is only a whisper compared to the blood of Jesus (Heb 12:24). Abel's death is not only a redemptive type, but a striking example that the choice taken by Adam and Eve has consequences from one generation to the next. Ever wonder where **Cain's wife** came from or who helped him build the first city recorded in the Bible (v. 17)? The Bible doesn't say.

Tombstones Tell of Life and Death

Genesis 5:1-32

How much do you know of the lives of your now deceased relatives? Do any tombstones stand out as memorable?

1. What stands out in this passage? (a) fathers (not mothers) begetting children, (b) length of life, (c) universality of death, (d) the exception of Enoch, (e) the symmetry and symbolism of names and numbers.

2. What's the difference between being made in God's likeness and being born in Adam's likeness (vs. 1-3)? (a) spiritual vs. sinful or carnal, (b) immortal vs. mortal, (c) heaven-made vs. earth-bound.

3. How is Genesis 5 a commentary on Genesis 3?

4. At what stage of human life do most of us begin to understand that death comes to everyone?

1. In whose likeness were you born—God's, your father's, your mother's or all of these?

2. Enoch was "no more" because God took him away (v. 24; Heb 11:5). This unusual expression replaces the sad refrain "and then he died." Does this suggest that Enoch, like Elijah (2Ki 2:10), bypassed death? Is there a lesson to be learned from Enoch, or was Enoch an exception?

3. What would you like your tombstone to say?

The Hebrew word for **father** (vs. 6-26) may also mean "ancestor." This and other factors suggest that biblical genealogies were selective and/or representative, leaving wide gaps. For example, for every name in the genealogy of Adam to Lamech through Cain (4:17-18), there's the same or nearly identical name found in the parallel genealogy of Adam to Methuselah through Seth (5:3-28). The ten names listed in Genesis 5 find their ten-name equivalence in Genesis 11:10-26. Such literary devices suggest gaps in the genealogies, which some believe are filled in or summarized by larger-than-life time spans. However, many believe that the large numbers in the early chapters of Genesis are literal, suggesting human longevity was greater in the era before the Flood.

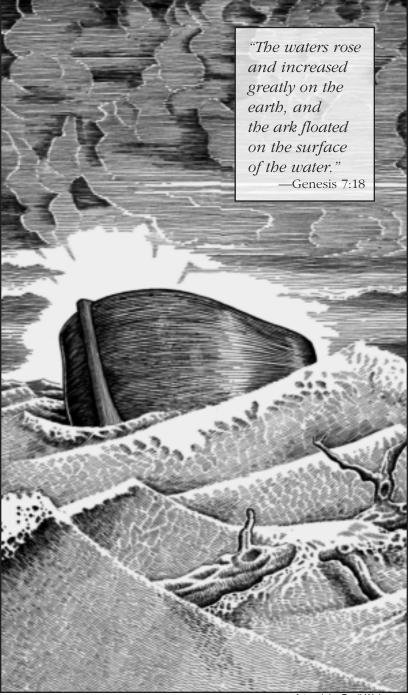
DAY 5

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

LIVING out the Word

window on the Word



Artwork by Basil Wolverton

A Survivor's Story

Genesis 6:1-8:22

Are you, or any family member, known to be a survivor? Of what?

 What situation on earth was so grievous that God had to wipe the earth clean (6:1-7, 11-13, 17)?
 How did Noah find favor with God (vs. 8-9, 22; 7:1; see Heb 11:6)?

3. An old man builds a large boat in a dry, land-locked region. Why? What would the public reaction have been?

4. Is judgment or redemption the more dominant theme? What turns the tide?

5. God "established," "commanded," "shut in" and "remembered" Noah. What does each of these interactions teach you about the way God works with his people?

6. What did God promise Noah and why (8:21-22)?

 In the context of Genesis 6:1-7 and 8:21-22, did God's view of humanity change? Would God ever again wipe the slate clean (2Pe 3:6-10)?
 Had you been there in Noah's day, what would you be doing? (a) building the boat, (b) mocking the builders, (c) checking weather reports, (d) "witnessing" to those who would be "left behind," (e) joining a survivalist group.

3. How often does God give commands that run counter to all normal evidence and custom?

Sons of God... daughters of men (6:2, 4). The first phrase could refer to angels (as in Job 1:6; 2:1; compare "mighty ones," Ps 29:1; also Jude 6-7). In other contexts, "sons of God" refers to people, particularly godly people or children of God (Hos 1:10; Lk 3:38; 1Jn 3:1-2). In the context of Genesis 6, "sons of God" could be the godly Sethites of Genesis 5, while the "daughters of men" (distinct from "daughters of God"?) could be the sinful Cainites of Genesis 4. By this theory, the two groups were to remain separate but they intermarried. Another theory interprets "sons of God" as figures of royalty or kings who were often associated with gods in ancient times. **The Nephilim** (6:4), meaning "fallen ones," were giants in size and stature, but also great simers.

DAY 6

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

LIVING out the Word

window on the Word

DAY 7

A Promising Rebirth of Nations

Genesis 9:1-10:32

OPENING up to the Word

DIGGING into the Word

What new beginnings have you participated in?

1. What cultural mandate and benediction did God reissue (9:1-7; compare 1:28-30)? What new provisions and restrictions did God add and why?

2. Why is life so valuable (9:5-17)?

3. In God's special covenant and promise to Noah, what were the conditions and signs of its fulfillment?

4. What does Noah's drunkenness and nakedness (9:18-28) teach about sin? About its consequences from one generation to the next?

LIVING out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

1. Among your ancestors, who stands out by name? For what reason?

2. What do you want your family to be known for?

Canaan... the slave of Shem (9:25). This curse found its fulfillment in Joshua's conquest of the Canaanites (Jos 9:27; 16:10; Jdg 1:28-35; 1Ki 9:20-21). Though it was once so distorted and twisted, this passage cannot be used to justify enslavement of African-Americans, since (1) there is no proof that Canaanites were black; (2) the curse was fulfilled. Since son can mean "descendant" and need not be next of kin, ancient Near East genealogies were highly selective and unreliable for purposes of dating events or detailing lineage. Yet the genealogies of Japheth (14 people groups), Ham (30 people groups) and Shem (26 people groups) were considered a full listing because their total came to 70 (a multiple of 10 and 7, both numbers signifying completeness). For another listing of these same peoples, read the parallel accounts of Japhethites, Hamites and Shemites in 1 Chronicles 1:5-27. Both genealogical accounts are more cultural and geographical than biological. The point of these skeletal histories seems to be setting Israel (descended from Shemites) at the center of God's purpose from the beginning.

