

QUESTIONS IN GENESIS

Introduction

In this study we look at questions that have arisen on matters in the book of Genesis. It is a natural thing that questions arise in connection with the contents of Genesis, because it covers an enormous period of time, from Creation to Joseph in Egypt. Whether one accepts Bishop Usher's chronology or not, the time period is very long with only one book of fifty chapters explaining this entire period. Look at the attached time line. Other than the natural occurrence of questions on what is said and what is not said, there is an intervening complicating problem. Our western society is a victim of the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. Since the late 17th century in Europe reason has been elevated. In many facets of society this is commendable. When dealing with God and His Word, it is debilitating. God gave us our reasoning ability in connection with spiritual things that it might be a handmaid to the mistress Scripture. Men in their arrogance have elevated reason above Scripture and beyond its capacity to explain. Think of the Ecclesiastes passage(3:11) "...He has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end." I think it is fair to say that our mind would explode were we to 'know' beyond what we can know now. To compare the mind of God with the mind of man it is like comparing the sun to the flame of a match. The sun is vast and continues. The match flame is comparatively tiny and short-lived.

When we interpret Scripture we use reason in its proper setting. For instance in explaining language we use our reasoning ability to grasp the meaning of words in context. In considering wording we use common sense which is basically reason at work. If you are in a house and throw a pen up it hits the ceiling and cannot go beyond the ceiling. So it is with reason, questions arise and reason can only go so far in answering them. We need to go outside the house to throw the pen beyond the limitation of the ceiling. So as we go to the Word and faith we are enabled to go beyond the limitation. Our Christian religion is full of mysteries which faith alone can grasp as we read and study the Word. Tragically, men like Bultmann, Tillich and even Barth with his neo-orthodoxy think the pen can pierce the ceiling. They elevate reason beyond its innate ability and show themselves to be victims of the Enlightenment. Our religion is one of mysteries: God is three and yet one, Jesus is God and man, Jesus is in heaven and yet with us on this earth...

Within the veil of the church the higher critics pose themselves as interpreters of Scripture. We agree with lower criticism which is proper, for instance comparing readings from different manuscripts to see which is the correct when a question arises. Our overarching principle is – Scripture Interprets Scripture. In bowing to God as the loving Lord who has given us the Book as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, we subject reason to its proper place and use, as you will see in this study. The Bible is the only book in all the world and throughout time that interprets itself. Scripture is of no one's private interpretation. II Pet. 1:20-21 We have received the Word not as the word of men, but as it truly is the Word of God which is at work within us. I Thess. 3:13 The fact is that the Spirit works within us with the Word. All of it is God-breathed and therefore profitable. II Tim. 3:16 His Spirit works with our spirit. He works within us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Phil. 2:13

As we delve into the questions, like Paul we believe all the Scriptures and we teach all the Scriptures. Acts 24:14, 20:27 Our approach is the historical-grammatical, letting Scripture speak. In considering the Hebrew grammar of Genesis notice that Hebrew is not a precise language like German. In German we have all the sets of prepositions which use the different cases: some for the genitive, some for the accusative, some for the dative, and some for either the dative or accusative. Hebrew has no such precision and so it is context that determines meaning far more so. In a wider sense we need to use the analogy of Scripture or faith, building on what we know to then better understand.

1)How was the world created?

Repeatedly in Genesis one we have it explicitly stated “God said”, so that it was by God's Word that creation took place during the six days. Peter also says, “...that by the Word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed...” 2 Pet. 3:6 And still by God's almighty Word He upholds the universe. Heb. 1:3 If we let God be God, we shall not find this strange nor need to find some other answer. Jesus when He walked on the earth spoke the word and miracles happened. Remember 'talitha cumi' of Mk. 5:41. While the magnitude of creation sometimes can astound us, the Word is clear. This same Lord who spoke and a little girl arose, spoke at creation and all came into being. “For in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him.” Col. 1:16 Heb. 11:3 “By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.”

2)When were the angels created?

Here we start to deal with questions on what is not said specifically. Already in Col. 1:16 we have it that 'all' was created in Him at the beginning. In Gen. 1:31 God saw all that He had made and it was very good. All angels were created good and the rebellion(Jude 6) of satan and his angels did not happen until after the six days.

3)Were the six days natural 24 hour days?

When we use words we use them in either a literal or a figurative sense. Generally we take a word in its normal figurative sense unless the context or other passages indicate it is used figuratively. When Jesus says He is the 'door' we obviously know He is using the word in a figurative way as an opening through which people may enter. Otherwise most of the time a door means a door. If you take a casual look through a concordance, most of the references for 'day' in either the Hebrew (יום) or Greek (ἡμέρα) refer to a literal understanding of either a 24 hour period, a specific day or daylight time of a normal day. This simply bears out that the normal use of a word is literal. If the word is used in a figurative sense then there has to be evidence in the context or in cross references that it is used figuratively. Otherwise it just has to be so obvious that there is no question as when Jesus calls Himself the 'door'. But even there the context of Jn. 10:7-10 points up that the word is figuratively used.

In Genesis one the context of 'day' is that there was evening and morning, which is the 24 hour day. The reason why 'evening' comes first is due to the Jewish calculation of the day from 6pm to 6am to 6pm which is still the 24 hour day. The use of 'evening and morning' and then the days numbered 1-6 shows it is a normal and literal use. In Exodus 20:11 Moses explains the Third Commandment by referring to the days as normal ones, “for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.” It would be really out of context that 'day' here would not refer to a normal day in the same passage with 'six days' and the 'seventh day'.

Look at a couple passages some try to use to say a 'day' in Genesis one is longer or an indeterminate time.

- 2 Pet. 3:8 “But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” First of all we have the use of the word 'as' which right off indicates a figurative use. Secondly, it is 'with the Lord'. For Him time means nothing. We though are in time and calculate accordingly. He speaks to us in language we can understand. Our God is not a one of confusion, but of order.

- Ps. 90:4 “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.” It is 'in God's sight' as He sees from eternity. We are yet on earth in space and in time

and He speaks to us accordingly.

4) Are there two creation accounts, one in Genesis one and another in Genesis two?

As we study Genesis which means 'beginnings' there are three beginnings given us historically: 1) the Beginning with Adam and Eve at creation, 2) the Beginning after the Flood with Noah and his family, 3) the Beginning with Abraham chosen from mankind to be the family and line from which the Savior would be born. There are not two creation accounts though. Genesis two is an elaboration on the sixth day when Adam and Eve were created.

- In Gen. 2:4 we read, "...in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens". While in Genesis one we say clearly that the term 'day' there was literal, here 'day' is used in a figurative way. It is already established on which day what was created. Here is a broad use of 'day' with 'the earth and the heavens'. Here the understanding is 'at that time'. We have in English the figurative use when we say 'day and age' meaning a general period. The Bible also has that figurative use though the number of uses of 'day' in a figurative sense are far less than for the literal/normal sense. In Ps. 20:1 "The Lord answer you in the day of trouble" is a period of time or repetitive days. Is. 11:10 "In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; Him shall the nations seek, and His dwelling shall be glorious" is not referring alone to Calvary but from Calvary on, a period of time, the New Testament time. The context and cross references interpret the meaning for us.

- In Gen. 2:5 we read, "when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground," designates this time as after the land animals were created but before Adam and Eve were, which is the sixth day. But some have said that already on the third day the plants were created and here it seems to be contradictory. Look carefully at the wording even in your own language. The Hebrew has for 'plant...and herb...' 'of the field' (השדה). This indicates there was no cultivation out in the field, while Eden had already been planted by God. No crops were being raised as man had not been created yet. In v. 15 we read that God put Adam in Eden to till it and keep it.

- In Gen. 2:19 we read, "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them..." It is established that on the sixth day the land animals were created, while on the fifth day the birds were created. In the translation it seems that birds and land animals are created together. Hebrew is not a precise language like German. We have the simple past – ich hatte, the perfect – ich habe gehabt and the past perfect – ich hatte gehabt. Hebrew does not have this. The context has to tell whether the Hebrew so-called perfect tense is simple past, perfect, or past perfect. The Hebrew has just the perfect and imperfect for a completed action or an incomplete action(future). The verse begins with ויצר which has an imperfect in Hebrew with a waw consecutive which gives it a reverse sense or perfect. It is easier to understand by seeing from the context that the Lord 'had formed' as a general statement with the birds on the fifth day and the land animals earlier on the sixth day.

As we study carefully we see there are no contradictions between the chapters of Genesis and between Genesis and the other books of the Bible. We have the high view of Scripture that we see it as the true Word of God with no errors and no contradictions. It proves itself in our hearts and minds. It is the devil who deceives and speaks out of both sides of his mouth, not our God who upholds what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and worthy of praise.

5) Where were the wives found for Cain and Seth?

This is an area in which Genesis does not speak, but common sense says they married other children of Adam and Eve. All people began with our ancient parents. In the times prior to the Law of Moses

there is nothing said about this not being allowed. In genetics we know now that intermarrying close within a family can cause recessive genes to dominate. Inbreeding causes problems. This is an area in which we can use our reasoning ability so long as it is not contrary to the clear Word. At the time of Cain and Seth people's bodies were not subject to what they are now after long generations. The faithful line of Seth grew and then declined to just eight before the Flood. The line of Cain multiplied in numbers and wickedness.

6) Didn't they worship God before what is recorded in Gen. 4:26?

"...At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord." Prior to the multiplying from Adam's home, we can assume that Adam worshiped God in his home. And the faithful did also in their homes. This passage is a general statement that points up that corporate worship began as we have come to know it in congregations.

7) Who are the 'sons of God and the daughters of men'?

In Gen. 6:1-2 "the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose." The problem was that the sons of God, those who believed in Him, chose human beauty over faithfulness to God. We think how King Ahab took Jezebel and she turned his heart to her god. In Deut. 7:1-4 God warned his people when He gave them Canaan not to intermarry. In the days of Ezra he had to deal with the intermarrying of believers with unbelievers. Here we see the first record of this intermarrying. In the face of the intermarrying God warned as recorded in Gen. 6:3 Some have conjectured that the 'sons of God' are angels. Our Lord said that angels do not marry. Mt. 22:30

8) What does it mean that "his days shall be a hundred and twenty years" in Gen. 6:3

There are areas in which we still have to study to see and understand. This for me is one of those. There are two possibilities for this passage.

- It indicates one hundred and twenty years of grace for the people of Noah's day. In Gen. 5:32 Noah is 500 years old and in 7:6 he is 600 years old. This additional twenty years may point to it being said before that one hundred years showing how God is long suffering and merciful.
- It indicates the upper limits of man's lifespan. Prior to the Flood we have Methuselah living 969 years. After the Flood man's lifespan dropped. See attached sheets on lifespans before and after the Flood. By David's time we read in Ps. 90:10 "The years of our life are threescore and ten(70), or even by reason of strength fourscore(80); yet their span is but toil and trouble..." We see today that there are those few who do approach the upper limit of 120.

9) Who are the Nephilim of Gen. 6:4?

The verse itself says they were mighty men of old. Sometimes the word is translated 'giants'. In the Hebrew הנפילים translated as Nephilim means 'the falling ones'. They were large men who were violent and fell upon those they plundered. It ties in with the moral breakdown that finally brought on the Flood. Much later when the spies were sent to spy out the land they saw Nephilim, men of great stature. Num. 13:32-33 The genetic code that allowed for this in men showed itself again. The same word is here for those violent plunderers who fall upon their prey, those that God designated at that time for destruction. For those who advance the proposition that these giants were the result of angels marrying women of the earth, the Lord's words apply - the angels in heaven neither marry nor are given in marriage.

10) Was the Flood in Gen. 6-8 a worldwide one?

If it were a local one, there would be no questions. The evidence in the text and in other Scripture is that it was a worldwide one. Let's let the Word speak.

- 6:6 "...I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground..."
- 6:13 "...I have determined to make an end of all flesh..."

- 6:17 "...I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die."
- 7:11 "...all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened."
- 7:17 "The flood continued...and it rose high above the earth."
- 7:19-20 "And the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered, the waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep."
- 7:21-23 "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth...everything on the dry land...every living thing that was upon the face of the ground..."
- 8:9 "...the waters were still on the face of the whole earth..."
- II Pet. 2:5 "if He did not spare the ancient world...He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly."

This cataclysm's results are readily seen to be immense and ultimately beyond our full understanding. The the waters covered the highest mountains, those are the mountains prior to the flood. With the collapse of the earth's crust as the waters below gushed up and the pressure of the waters as they settled, there were upthrustings also, as when you push down on one part of a balloon and another part pushes up.

11)How much water was involved?

The fountains of the great deep involved the waters that were below, while the windows of heaven involved the waters above. Gen. 1:6-7 There evidently was a vast canopy of water above that encircled the earth. The cloud cover we have today is not comparable to this pre-flood water above. With the two sources of water changes occurred on earth that had to be astounding. The time period for the effect of the waters is reflected in the accompanying chart and reminds us that for over a year the changes were happening and even beyond that. Today we benefit from this ancient judgment in so far as we use oil and coal, which have carbon and were formed from living matter that washed into deposits.

12)How large was the ark?

In Gen. 6:15-16 we learn that it was 450 feet long and 75 feet wide with three stories. In next considering the available space to preserve what God commanded consider the attached sheet showing what has recently been built according to Bible listed dimensions.

13)How could all the animals fit into the ark?

In 6:19 there were to be two of every sort going into the ark. In 6:20 we learn that they were according to their 'kind' וּמִיָּד. Since Linneaus(1778) we have a scientific classification system of: Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species. Perhaps it is at our modern level of 'Family' that the 'kind' is. One thing is for sure, they had to be able to reproduce as they were to be male and female. From what we know of animals today all cattle are in the bovine family. Think of Adam and Eve and then Noah and his wife. All people are descended from them and yet what a variety there is. This is the same with the animals. While there is great variety in cattle, all came from the progenitor pair. We know through genetics that there are codes built into each. Only two of each kind or family was needed.

14)In Gen. 6:19 its says "two of every sort" but in 7:2 it says "seven pairs". What is the difference?

Two of everything in 6:20 is "to keep them alive." In chapter seven the expansion for clean animals and birds to seven pairs would be for either sacrifice or eating.

15)What about the sins of the patriarchs?

There are moral and ethical questions that arise also in Genesis. God discloses to us what He wants

to. There is much that is not told us. When we look at the lives of the patriarchs we see they were sinners saved by the grace of God. In Genesis we have the type of book in the Bible called a historical narrative. God does not always attach a note to say that something was right or wrong. We need other clear passages to tell us that. These could be principle passages which go well beyond the example or history or didactic passages that teach us, that tell us or people in general what to do or not to do.

- Abraham – While we know him as a man of faith with his willingness for instance to sacrifice his son Isaac, considering that God could bring him back from the dead, he was also a sinner. The narrative shows us this. He lied about his wife Sarah to the King of Egypt – Gen. 12:11-19. In the history we see the results of lying. Some time later we read the record that Abraham lied again about his wife Sarah this time to King Abimelech of Gerar – Gen. 20:1-13. Abraham, a repetitive sinner, defends himself here even though we see that it was wrong. We know lying is wrong from the clear passage Col. 3:9 "Do not lie to one another..."
- Isaac – When Isaac dwelt at Gerar, he lied about his wife. Gen. 26:6-10 While God does not intervene with words, Abimelech does. The clear passage is Col. 3:9.
- Judah – When Judah commits adultery with his daughter-in-law thinking she is a harlot the clear passage is the 6th Commandment. Gen. 38:12-26

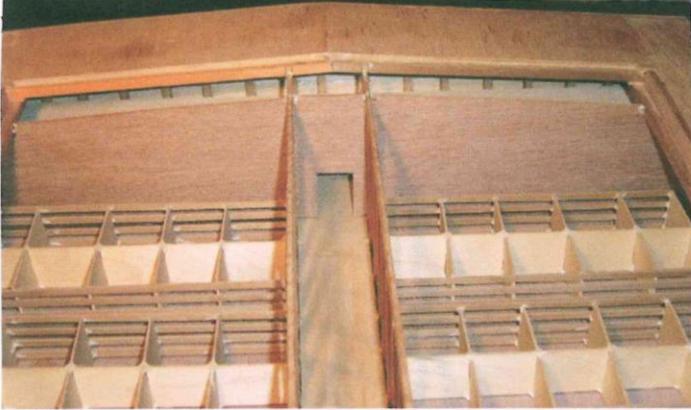
16)What about the different numbers in the numbering of Jacob's family?

Through a careful study of the immediate context the supposed contradiction is disposed of. In Gen. 46:26 Jacob's family are numbered as 66, while in just the next verse they are said to be 70. To the 66 must be added Jacob, Joseph and Joseph's two sons.

In Acts 7:14 Stephen says they were 75 souls. Through careful study we see that Stephen is including the two sons of Manasseh and the three sons of Ephraim.

Conclusion

Although God's Word is clear, it is man's mind that is befuddled. We operate by faith in God and His Word. It explains itself as the Spirit interprets for us. To God alone belongs the glory.





Time Periods of the Flood

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	DATE	NUMBER OF DAYS	EVENT	GENESIS REFERENCE
	Month 2 Day 10	waited 7	Entered the ark.	7:4, 10
Water Prevailed 150 days (7:24)	*Month 2 Day 17	lasted 40	Rain began.	7:4-6, 11, 12
	Month 3 Day 26	end of 40	Rain stopped.	7:4, 11
	*Month 7 Day 17	end of 150	Ark rested on Ararat.	7:24; 8:4
Water Receded 150 days (8:3)	*Month 10 Day 1	waited 40	Tops of mountains visible.	8:5-6
	Month 11 Day 10	waited 1	Raven sent.	8:7
	Month 11 Day 11	waited 7	Dove sent; returns.	8:8-9
	Month 11 Day 19	waited 7	Dove sent; returns with olive leaf.	8:10-11
	Month 11 Day 27		Dove sent; does not return.	8:12
	Month 12 Day 17	end of 150	Water fully receded.	8:3
Drying of Earth	*Month 1 Day 1		Covering of ark removed.	8:13
	*Month 2 Day 27		Earth dry; left ark.	8:14-19
Statistics	<p>One month equals 30 days. Total time elapsed in the ark = 1 year, 17 days = $360 + 17 = 377$ days</p> <p>7 days waiting + 150 days water prevailing + 150 days water receding + 70 days earth drying = 377 days</p>			

Genealogies from Adam to Abraham*

NAME	AGE AT BIRTH OF SON	YEARS LIVED AFTER BIRTH OF SON	TOTAL YEARS	GENESIS REFERENCE
Adam	130	800	930	5:3-5
Seth	105	807	912	5:6-8
Enosh	90	815	905	5:9-11
Kenan	70	840	910	5:12-14
Mahalalel	65	830	895	5:15-17
Jared	162	800	962	5:18-20
Enoch	65	300	365	5:21-24
Methuselah	187	782	969	5:25-27
Lamech	182	595	777	5:28-31
Noah 600 at beginning of flood			950	7:11; 9:29
Shem 98 at end of flood			600	11:10-11
Shem	100	500	600	11:10-11
Arpachshad	35	403	438	11:12-13
Shelah	30	403	433	11:14-15
Eber	34	430	464	11:16-17
Peleg	30	209	239	11:18-19
Reu	32	207	239	11:20-21
Serug	30	200	230	11:22-23
Nahor	29	119	148	11:24-25
Teraht	70	135	205	11:26-32

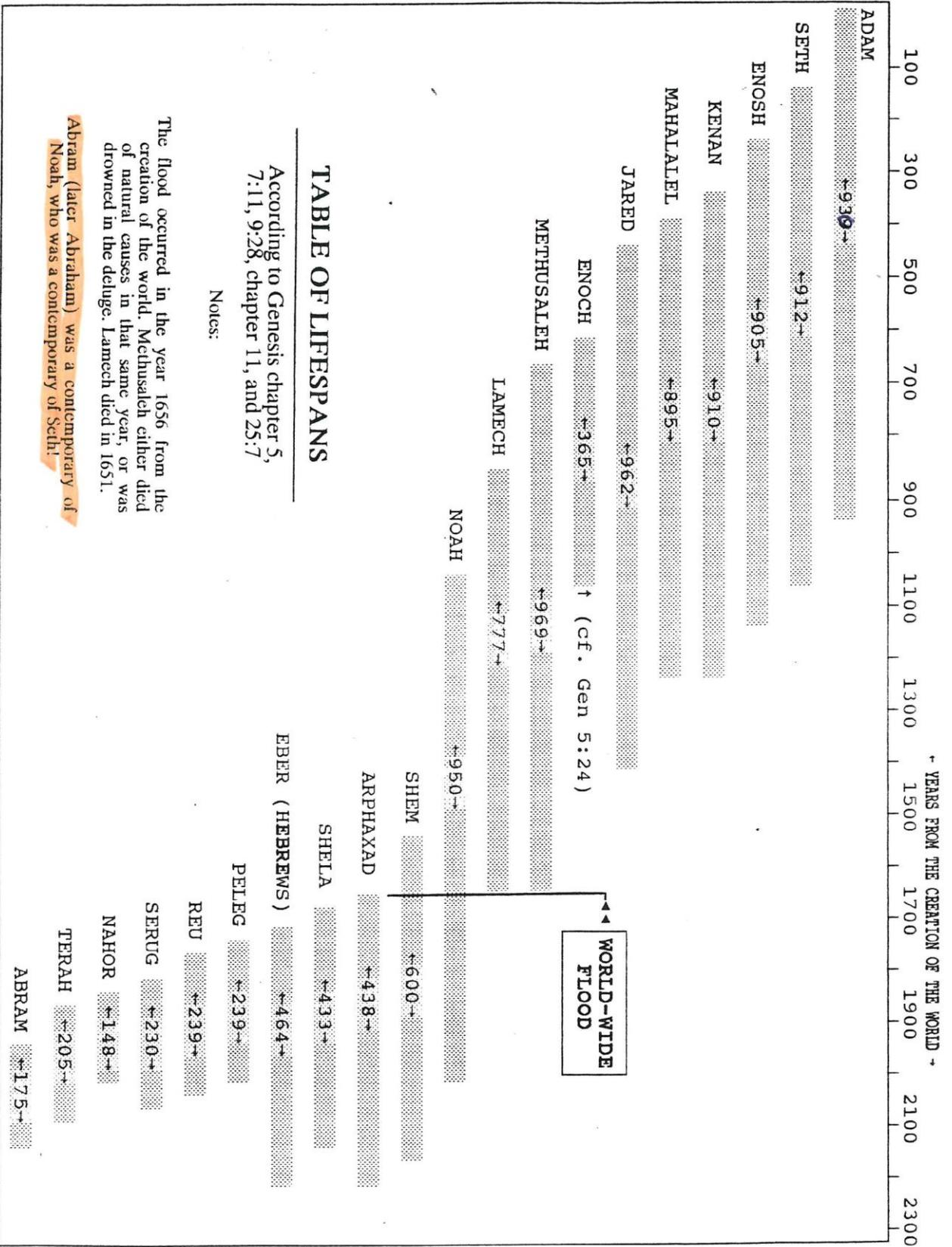


TABLE OF LIFESPANS

According to Genesis chapter 5, 7:11, 9:28, chapter 11, and 25:7

Notes:

The flood occurred in the year 1656 from the creation of the world. Methusaleh either died of natural causes in that same year, or was drowned in the deluge. Lamech died in 1651.

Abram (later Abraham) was a contemporary of Noah, who was a contemporary of Seth!

WORLD-WIDE FLOOD

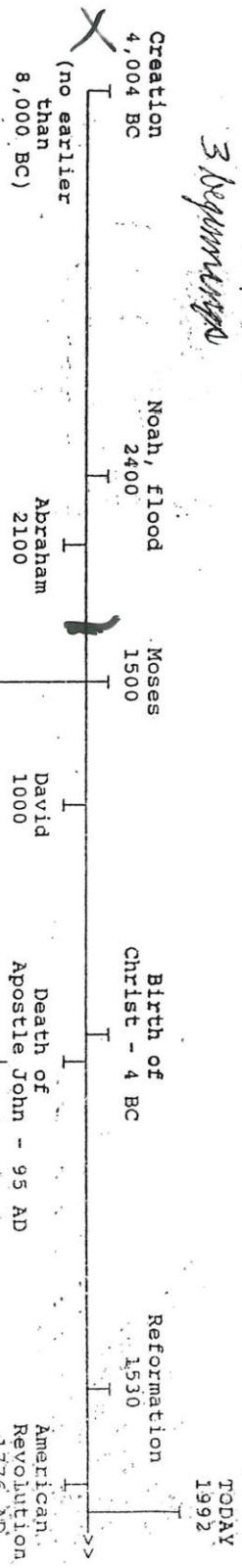
"HISTORY AT A GLANCE"
(Most dates are approximate)

Believers in Old Testament times had faith in God's Promised Savior -- Prophets detailed His life.

Jesus Christ, True Man and True God, lives a sinless life. He dies to pay for the sins of all people, then rises to rule as King of all, forever.

Promises kept; we await Jesus' second coming!

3 Requirements
Amos



GOD'S WORD INSPIRED
THROUGH PROPHETS, APOSTLES

God reveals His entire plan to save the world in His book, THE BIBLE. 40 different human writers produce 66 books over a period of 2500 years, all pointing to the same message:

CHRIST CRUCIFIED FOR SINNERS -- FOR YOU!

