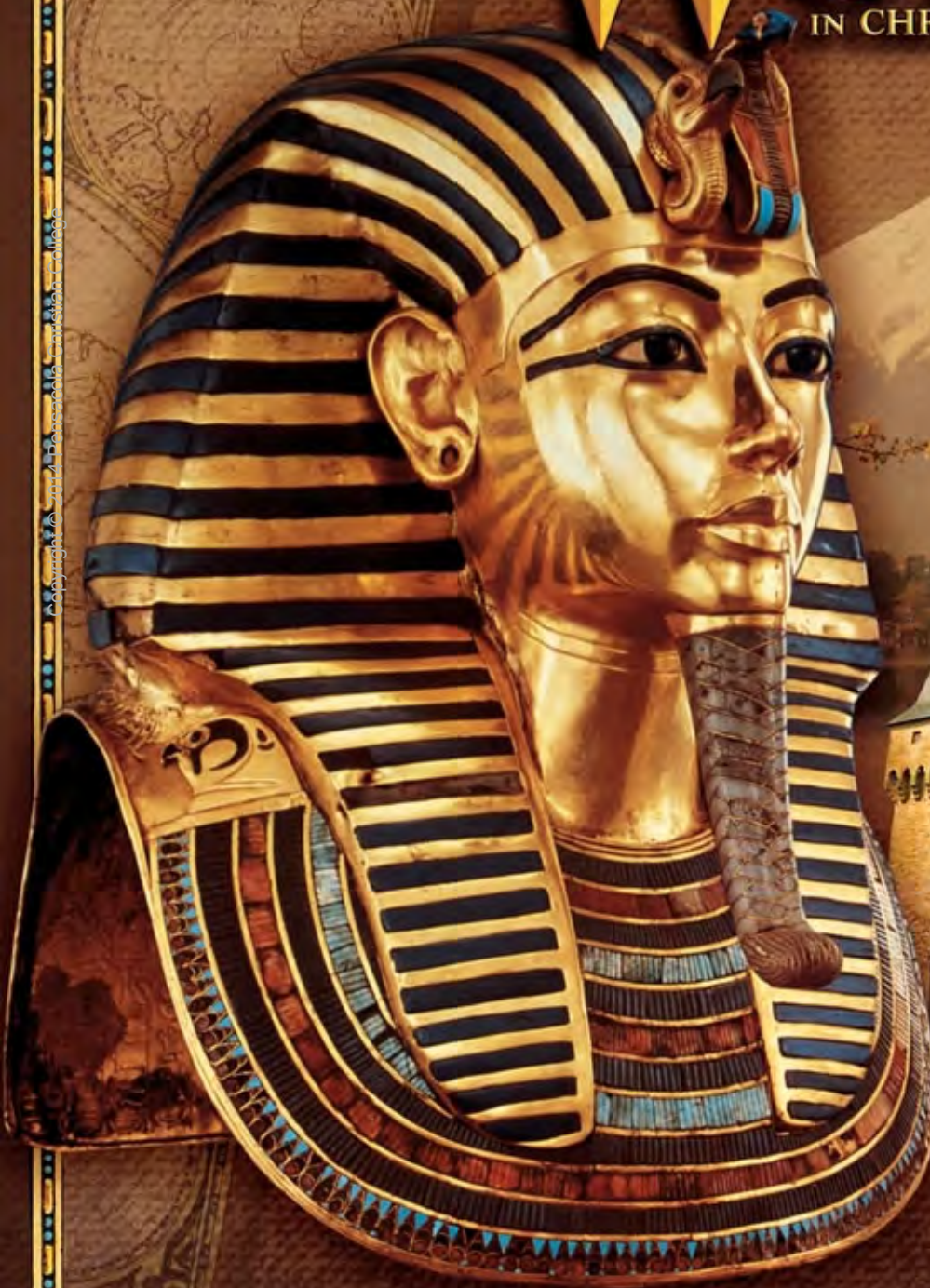


# HISTORY OF THE WORLD

IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE  
Fifth Edition



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HISTORY SERIES

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## Pronunciation Key

Symbol • Example	Symbol • Example
ā     āte	ō     nōt
ā     clāre	oi     boil
ā     fāt	ōō     fōod
ā     fāther	ōō     bōōk
ā     ago (ā·gō')	ou     out
ē     ēven	th     thin
ē     ēgg	th     there
é (ar)     pondēr	tū     pictūre
ī     īce	ū     ūnit
ī     īl	ū     hūrt
ō     ōver	ū     ūp
ō     cōrd, taugt, saw	zh     measure

## History of the World

Fifth Edition

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## Beginning of World History: The Ancient Middle East. . . . . 1

- 1 The Beginning . . . . . 1
- 2 From Sumer to Canaan . . . . . 8
- 3 Down to Egypt . . . . . 18
- 4 Israel in Its Land . . . . . 29



## New Empires and Cultures: The Middle East, Greece, and Rome . . . . . 39

- 5 According to His Will: Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. . . . . 39
- 6 Greece—A Drama in Two Acts . . . . . 48
- 7 Rome before Christ . . . . . 64
- 8 Rome after Christ. . . . . 77



## The Middle Ages and the Distortion of Christianity. . . . . 89

- 9 Early Church History . . . . . 89
- 10 Islam and the Crusades . . . . . 100
- 11 From Empire to Feudalism . . . . . 107
- 12 An Age of Darkness . . . . . 120



## Beginning of the Modern Age . . . . . 133

- 13 The Protestant Reformation . . . . . 133
- 14 Post-Reformation Europe . . . . . 147
- 15 The English Nation . . . . . 161
- 16 The Age of Exploration: Asia and the Americas . . . . . 186
- 17 The United States—A New Kind of Nation . . . . . 208

# Contents (cont.)



## The Rise of Modern Europe . . . . . 235

- 18 France in the Modern Age . . . . . 235
- 19 The British Empire: Asia, Africa, and Australia. . . . . 262
- 20 Science and Industry in the Modern Age . . . . . 288
- 21 The New World of Classics . . . . . 314



## An Era of Change . . . . . 327

- 22 World War I and the Rise of Communism . . . . . 327
- 23 Before and During World War II. . . . . 348
- 24 The Cold War Era . . . . . 371
- 25 Toward a New Millennium . . . . . 393
- 26 Change in the New Millennium . . . . . 408

- Atlas . . . . . 426
- Index . . . . . 430
- Map Index . . . . . 438
- Notes . . . . . 439
- Works Cited . . . . . 441
- Credits . . . . . 443

# The Beginning

## Highlights

- Creation
- Flood
- Fall of Man
- Dispersion

### 1.1

## Creation

### The Beginning of the World

World history is a story: it had a beginning, and it will have an end. What we believe about the beginning affects how we understand history. The patterns we see, the lessons we learn, the estimates we make of the goodness or badness of men and situations—these things and more depend upon our beliefs about the beginning.

**Genesis**, the first book of the Bible, is the most reliable source for what we need to know about the beginning of world history. If you have read it, you have already begun to study history. The word *Genesis* means “beginning” or “origin.” The book of Genesis tells us that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” including the universe and man.

### The Beginning of Man

**Adam**, whose name means “man,” and **Eve**, whose name means “mother of all,” were the last

creations of God. In order of importance, however, they were first. God had made everything else—even the sun, moon, and stars—within view of man’s habitation on Earth.

*Man is special to God because he alone was created in the image of God.* Man is definitely not God or “a god.” Man is man. But man possesses some characteristics similar to God’s that permit fellowship with God. Man’s special characteristics include (1) language and thought, (2) awareness of the difference between right and wrong, and (3) freedom to make choices.

We must never forget man’s special characteristics in our study of world history. No plant or animal possesses these characteristics. We can have a kind of relationship with one another that no other creatures can share. Most important, we can relate to God in a way that no other part of creation can.

Our freedom to make choices is also important. Men are responsible for what they have done in history. How we choose to use language and thought and how we choose between right and wrong make “all the difference in the world.”

The first human beings were highly intelligent. Adam, for example, classified all the varieties of animals, giving each kind a name. He knew language well; it was he who named his wife so appropriately as the mother of all. Of course, the pair could have learned much

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* Gen. 1:1





more. Because of their direct and frequent fellowship with God, what God might have chosen to reveal to them about the workings of the universe can only be imagined.

Adam and Eve lived at peace with one another and in a relationship of perfect equality. They were not disturbed with quarrels provoked by jealousy and selfishness, for they did not know these sins. They could always reach complete agreement on any matter because evil desires did not interfere with their powers of reason. They could share equally in all matters of decision.

God placed all of creation under the dominion of man. The world was his to rule, not to waste or destroy, but to develop for the benefit of mankind. God expected this dominion to be great, for He specifically commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and fill (populate) the earth.

We can only guess what the results would have been had Adam and Eve continued to obey God. World history as we know it resulted from a choice that Adam and Eve made.

## Section 1.1 Review

1. Why do we begin our study of world history with the book of Genesis?
2. Why is man special to God?
3. List three special characteristics of man.

**Identify:** Genesis, Adam, Eve

## 1.2

### Fall of Man

#### The Beginning of Human Sin

God the Creator laid down but one command to Adam and Eve. They were not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they ate the fruit, they would die.

But Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent and tempted her to eat of the forbidden fruit. She yielded to the temptation, and Adam followed suit. Adam and Eve had committed the first human sin. They had rebelled

against God. Discontented with being creatures made in the image of God, they wanted to be as God themselves.

God could not turn His back on what had happened. As a just God—and, as we will see, a loving God—He punished the man and the woman.

Paradise was lost, and the world took on many important characteristics familiar to us. Perfect equality ended; now the husband would rule his wife. Childbirth would be painful. Work would be tedious and difficult. Rather than leisurely plucking fruit from the limbs of trees in a thriving garden, man would have to plow and plant in ground that more easily grew weeds and thorns than food. Man's greatest punishment was to be driven from the garden and from the fruit of the tree of eternal life. Henceforth, men would die.

From this original choice of sin has flowed a story of crimes and tears, the actual world history we have known. All who have lived have also sinned. The work of evil has continued, and Satan's power through temptation has grown. In the beginning, there was perfection. Since the beginning, man has fallen to ever greater depths of rebellion against God.

## A Different Story of the Beginning

**The story of evolution.** The extreme of man's rebellion against God is the denial of the Bible's teaching that God is the Creator of man. According to the story of **evolution**, man was not created directly by God but instead "evolved" from the animals. Evolutionists say that at some point in history certain animals began accidentally changing in ways that eventually produced a man. This idea has many weaknesses, however. It cannot explain the beginning of world history, and it gives a false impression of man.

**Logic's traps for evolution.** We have seen that man differs from animals in that man possesses language and thought. Anyone who believes that man evolved from animals must explain how language and reason began. But such an explanation cannot be given, for

it is a question of "chickens and eggs—which came first?"

Human thought requires language. Much of our thinking is in words. When we think, it is as if we listen to ourselves talk inside our heads. Language, on the other hand, requires thought. Unless there is thought behind the sounds called language or speech, what comes out is mere gibberish. Which came first, language or thought?

Without language and the ability to communicate with one another, there would be no truly human society. Instead of society, we would have a mere herd or swarm. But language and communication assumes men living together in society. Which came first, society or language?

Genesis, of course, does not have these problems of logic. It presents man as the direct creation of God and from the very first having all three—language, thought, and society.

**Evolution, humanism, and the destruction of man.** The evolutionist's only escape from logic is to downplay man's special characteristics. Thus, he will underrate man's speech and reason. As for language, the evolutionist will say that the animals have it, or at least something very close. Thought, he says, is really nothing more than a process of electricity and chemistry. The evolutionist will also attack man's awareness of the difference between right and wrong and man's freedom to choose, for he cannot explain the evolution of these characteristics. The awareness of right and wrong is just something we learn, he says, not something we are born with, and man's freedom to choose is just an illusion. To an evolutionist, man is really nothing more than a computer made of flesh and bone, and not a very fast one at that.

Do you begin to see the consequences of rebelling against God? Do you begin to see the result of **humanism**, putting man in place of or above God? Not God but man is hurt. When man tries to be God, he only succeeds in making himself like an animal or a machine.

The Bible's account of the beginning elevates God. It also elevates man, but not at God's expense. Humanism, whether in the

guise of evolution or of some other view, tries to build man up by downplaying or ignoring God. It rebels against God but utterly destroys man by making him no different from an animal or a machine.

### Cain and the First Murder

**Cain's crime.** The evil consequences of rebellion against God became obvious even in the first two sons of Adam and Eve when **Cain**, who placed his own opinion of what is good above God's, killed his brother **Abel** in a fit of jealousy and hatred. God was quick to punish Cain by sending him away from the land of his father to live as a wanderer. God had not yet laid down the penalty of capital punishment for murder, the requirement that a man who murders should himself suffer death.

**Cain's culture.** Cain lived on to father a line of descendants who built a culture in rebellion against God. A **culture** is *the way of life of a group of people*. Cultures include how people make a living for themselves. Cain's descendants engaged in a variety of occupations, learning, for example, how to use the earth's metals to make tools of iron and bronze (a mixture of copper and tin). Cultures also include art and music. Cain's descendants learned to make and play musical instruments. Their accomplishments were indeed very impressive.

*The most important part of a culture is how people relate to God.* The descendants of Cain were growing in knowledge and abilities, but they were also growing in rebellion against God—a pattern we will often see in world history. Their evil deeds toward one another were increasingly violent. By the fourth generation, a man named **Lamech** bragged openly of killing a man who had wounded him and a boy who had merely struck him.

### Seth and Continued Hope

Cain's descendants continued to grow in numbers and in evil, but they did not have the entire earth to themselves. After the murder of Abel and God's banishment of Cain, Adam and Eve had another son named **Seth**. Seth and his descendants were not perfect, but

some of them were at least aware of their sin and inclined to repent. They recognized that God is God and that man is man, the creation of God.

In world history, however, *Cain's way or culture tends to be the stronger among men*. Fifteen hundred years after Seth's birth, God could find but one man that He could view with favor. This man, **Noah**, became the only hope for the continued existence of the human race.

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### Section 1.2 Review

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1. What was the first human sin? What effect did it have on world history?
2. What is a culture?
3. What is the most important part of a culture?
4. Which culture tends to be stronger in world history: Cain's or Seth's?

**Identify:** evolution, humanism, Cain, Abel, Lamech, Seth, Noah

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### 1.3

## A Chance for a New Beginning

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### The Flood

By the time of Noah, the earth was so filled with evil that God in His justice could no longer tolerate it. Thus, God decided to destroy mankind with a great flood.

The human race exists today only because God warned Noah of the coming destruction. God instructed Noah to build an ark so that he and his wife and his three sons and their wives could escape the Flood. In faith, Noah obeyed the Word of God and became one of the greatest figures of world history, for without Noah's faith, world history would have come to an abrupt end.

After the Flood, Noah and his family came out of the ark, together with the animals God had instructed Noah to save. Man had a chance for a new beginning, but it was not





**Mt. Ararat:** After the Flood, Noah's ark came to rest on this mountain range in modern Turkey.

a return to paradise. Living conditions were worse than ever before. Great changes had occurred in the land and the climate. There was hostility between man and the animals. Most important, men, even Noah, still had a sin nature.

God placed a beautiful rainbow in the sky as a symbol of the promise He made to Noah and his descendants that He would never again destroy all life on the earth with a great flood. At the same time, God also reassured man of his special place in the creation. God had not forgotten that man is the one creature He made in His own image. To teach man the sanctity of human life, God Himself established the law of **capital punishment** (the death penalty) for murder and ordained that man set up systems of law and justice for the restraint of evil.

Man had another chance to build a culture in submission to God. As the population increased rapidly, however, the vast majority of men chose to build not with God but against Him. Men had learned little from the Flood, the greatest catastrophe the human race has ever known. Many ancient writings from all over the world affirm the reality of the Flood, but only the Bible makes it clear why

*Shortly after the dispersion of mankind from the Tower of Babel, civilizations arose in Europe, Asia, and Africa.*

the Flood took place: it says that *the Flood was God's punishment for the height of evil man had reached*. Rebellion against God reached a new peak soon after the Flood, and God again intervened with enormous consequences for world history.

## The Beginning of Nations

**The Tower of Babel.** All human beings born after the Flood are descendants of Noah's three sons—**Shem, Ham, and Japheth**. The survivors of the Flood and their descendants gradually migrated southeastward from the mountains in which the ark had come to rest and settled in a plain called **Shinar** [shī' nār], also known in world history as **Sumer**.

**Nimrod**, a descendant of Noah's son Ham, emerged as the leader of the group. With his reputation as a mighty hunter and as a rebel against God, ambitious Nimrod "began to be a mighty one in the earth" (Gen. 10:8). He eventually became the supreme ruler of eight cities. At a time when "the whole earth was of one language" (Gen. 11:1) and all people lived in one small area, Nimrod in effect ruled the world.

Under Nimrod's leadership, the people who had come together in Shinar began to build the city of **Babel**, later known as **Babylon**. In the midst of it, they began to construct a tower reaching far up into the sky. Nimrod and his followers were humanists. Defying God's commandment to replenish the earth, they declared "let us make us a name, lest we



be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4).

**Many languages.** God's response to these men was simply to confuse their one language. Miraculously, He caused all the people (except perhaps within extended families) to speak different languages. Nimrod's dominion collapsed without the bond of a common language, for the people were no longer able to live and work together. Thus, the people dispersed across the earth, taking their many languages with them.

**Many nations.** Language is one of the chief sources of difference and division in the human race. A common language encourages a group of people to think of themselves as a unit or a nation and not just a collection of individuals. A **nation** is *a large group of people who think of themselves as one and act in history as a unit.*

The division of the human race into many nations has had many consequences. World history has been marked with wars and international strife. Imagine what the human race

could have accomplished if, from the Flood until now, all men had worked together for their mutual good.

Because of the fall into sin at the beginning of world history, however, it is good that God saw fit to slow down the growth of human power. Without the division of mankind into nations, nothing would have been "restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11:6).

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### Section 1.3 Review

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1. Why did God send the Flood?
2. How much did man learn from the Flood?
3. What are two names for the place where the survivors of the Flood settled?
4. What event resulted in the confusion of languages and the dispersion of people into many nations?
5. What is a nation?

**Identify:** Shem, Ham, Japheth, Nimrod, Babel

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## The Legacy of Babel

After the dispersion from Babel, towerlike structures arose in several different areas of the world. In Sumer, the location of the original tower, huge ziggurats [zīg'ōō·rāts] reached into the sky at a very early date. Not long after, in Egypt, towering pyramids began to be erected. Even in faraway Central America the ancient Mayas [mā'yəz] built soaring structures combining the basic shape of pyramids with features of ziggurats such as stairways.

The striking similarity of such buildings is just what we would expect to find, based on the Bible's teaching that all of the cultures on the earth are the result of a dispersion from one original center of culture.

The Bible gives no details about the design of the Tower of Babel. With the

actual structure having long ago vanished into the mists of the past, we can only guess about its appearance. To many people, it seems likely that the tower resembled the later ziggurats in the same area, but no one knows for sure. Perhaps the tower looked more like the Egyptian pyramids or even the Mayan buildings. On the other hand, nothing in the Bible's description of the tower rules out the possibility that it resembled some of our modern skyscrapers or even the gantry for a rocket launching!

