

Lesson 2 **Creation and the Garden of Eden**

Let's pull the latter five days' lessons together and take a look at our timeline so far:

Before Creation of the heavens and the earth, in Eternity Past, **God was** and He was the Great **"I AM."** The meaning of the great "I AM" is "I AM, I was, and I will be forever more." We get the correct idea that God has been for all of Eternity Past, He is today, and He will be in existence for evermore. **GOD IS NOT DEAD. HE IS VERY ALIVE.** This means God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have always existed.

This is my take and I will try and explain it further later on when teaching on this in class: I believe that sometime in Eternity Past God created each angel, individually. There may be billions, trillions, or even quadrillions of angels that have been created by the Godhead. Do you remember stars being symbolic of angels in Revelation 1 through 3? The complete number of the stars cannot be counted today even with our most powerful telescopes. The numbers of the angels in the quadrillions is not unrealistic when we compare it to the number of stars that we have seen. And recently we have found some of those stars we've seen are actually galaxies with hundreds of billions of stars each.

Eternity Past was before Creation. Things get really weird when we try to understand events happening outside of "time." I believe that "time" was created for us, in our beginning. It was created, amongst other reasons, so that we would have some understanding of the consequences of our actions.

With this assumption, the "heavens," plural, of Genesis 1:1 would include our atmosphere and the immediate heavens, but probably not the Heaven where God resides. Remember Heaven for us is being in the presence of God. Hell would be away from God's presence for Eternity. I know this gets a bit weird, as well. I wish I could find a Jewish commentary on Genesis as validation of my "heavens" theory, but as of right now, I have not. However, this is how the Hebrew has been translated into English in the Jewish study Bible, JPS Tanakh:

"When God began to create heaven and earth the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water..."¹⁰

The Sar-Shalom online Tanakh from the Hebrew to the English is very similar to our translations:

¹⁰ The Jewish Study Bible, Jewish Publication Society, Tanakh Translation, Oxford University Press, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Editors. p.12.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters...”

Okay, back to our timeline:

We have eternity past where God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit have lived in perfect harmony with one another for Eternity.

They create angels individually. They create six special Cherubim to protect God’s holiness. These six surround the throne for protection and they carry His throne as well. Now, eternity is different than time, but there are sequences of events happening in heaven, outside time, so there has to be some way to measure events. We can glean from the Scripture that the head Cherub is ha-Satan. We find this information in **Isaiah 14** and **Ezekiel 28**. We don’t know what name he had been given. The ha-Satan is a title not a name. His name was taken away from him when he rebelled and was cast out of heaven. Perhaps, one other of the Cherubim followed ha-Satan in rebellion and gets kicked out of heaven, also. This one is called Abaddon, although this is probably not his name, either, since he was disgraced and was kicked out of heaven, as well.

So, one-third of the heavenly hosts are kicked out of heaven, because of the iniquity of one angel and those who followed him. They are thrown to the earth. What kind of mess do you think they could have made out of the earth? Remember all of this happening in eternity past may or may not be the way it happened. Only God knows. This is only one possibility I am looking at. So, if I am correct, about one-third of the heavenly hosts being kicked out of Heaven and to the earth before the Creation event found in Genesis 1:1, then it may give us a clue as to what the darkness over the deep was and also give us an idea why God would create Mankind. Was God giving those angels who had stayed with Him and who had not rebelled against Him a reward or a validation of their choice to obey and stay behind?

Why Man? Why create Man? Man would be given volition just like the angels – very dangerous. With volition, Man could choose to follow God or rebel and follow the world, the flesh, or the devil.

We don’t know why God created Man. However, with the creation of Man, God could show those angels who stayed with him, that He was absolutely fair with sentencing ha-Satan and his minions to the Eternal Lake of Fire for rebelling against Him. Some of Humanity would look to His Son for forgiveness, for salvation in His Beloved only Son. Some would reject Him out rightly.

Before “day” six of Creation, before Man had been made in the likeness of the Godhead, I can see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in their dwelling place, having a corporate meeting over which One of the Trinity would be the One to go to earth to die for the sins of the people. Jesus drew the short straw. I don’t mean this to be trivializing in any way; I cannot even imagine the angst that went into this decision.

Nevertheless, do you suppose God the Father let out a huge sigh right before He gave life to Adam (not a sigh of relief, but okay, “here we go” sigh)? Should He do it or should He not do it? The Trinity knew what was going to happen if they went ahead and created Mankind: Man would sin and Jesus would have to go. They did it anyway. Why?

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.’”

This is what Colossians chapter one says about God, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.’

Day 1 Jesus is the Light of the World

Please write the text of **Genesis 1:1-4** in the space provided below:

Next, please write the text of **John 1: 1-5** in the space provided below:

What time do both of these passages of Scripture talk about?

What do both passages talk about?

Can you find Jesus in the Genesis Creation passage?

What does the name “Elohim” imply about the Godhead?

According to the John passage, where is Jesus at Creation?

What is Jesus responsible for in Creation?

What is created first in the Genesis passage?

What was Jesus called in the John passage?

What did God do to the light in **Genesis 1:4**?

What did God say about the Light in **Genesis 1:4**?

What did God say about the Light and darkness in **John 1:5**?

Do you see the Holy Spirit mentioned in Creation in the Genesis passage? If so what is He called?

What was the Spirit of God doing?

What was the Spirit of God hovering over?

In the Gospel of John, penned by the same apostle John who wrote down the Book of Revelation, Jesus is called the Light of the World. I find it so fascinating that the first creation of the natural world was Light. “And God said, ‘Let there be Light.’” Light is absolutely essential for every thing else to exist. Without light, we could not see. If we could not see, then there would be no need for eyes. Without light, none of the plants on this earth would grow from seeds. Without light, there would be no animals to eat of the plants of the world because there would be no plants. Without light, everything would have remained dark. We would not be able to see color or beauty. I would like you to stop whatever you are doing right now and just think about light. Write down your thoughts below:

Please check out the following references for light in the Gospel of John and write down your thoughts that you would like to remember about Jesus being the Light:

John 1:4

John 1:5

John 1:7 re John the Baptist

John 1:8 re John the Baptist

John 3:19

John 3:20

John 3:21

John 5:35

John 8:12

John 9:5

John 11:9

John 11:10

John 12:35

John 12:26

John 12:46

Now, please go back to **Genesis 1:1-4** and **John 1:1-4** and read these two passage again. **Genesis 1:1-4** tells us Elohim (plural) was present at Creation and that Elohim spoke light into existence. Elohim is Jesus the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.

John 1:1-4 tells us that Jesus the Son was present at Creation with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. **John 1:1-4** also tells us everything was made by God the Son's hand. The Holy Spirit was present at Creation and He was moving over the surface of the waters. The earth did not have any form. The earth was void or empty. There was darkness over the surface of the deep. The Spirit of God was moving or brooding over the surface of the waters.

Was the Spirit of God brooding over the dark waters because ha-Satan had already been cast out of heaven and to the earth and the earth was darkened from the presence of evil residing on it? Just thoughts. Or was there something else going on? In **Genesis 1:4** "God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness." Could we say right from the beginning that light was good and the absence of light was darkness and the absence of light was not good? This has so many spiritual implications.

"And there was evening and there was morning, one day." In the Hebrew, the word for "day" is "yom" and means 24 hours, from sundown of one day to sundown of the next. There was no sundown to begin with, only darkness – and then there was light and then a light down, day one.

Why would I include all of this about Jesus is the Light of the World in our study of Heaven? Stay tuned there is method to my madness.

Day 2 Was the Garden of Eden Heaven?

Let's describe what God made in the remaining days of Creation to transform this earth into everything necessary for Mankind to dwell.

Creation Day 2

Please read **Genesis 1: 6-8** and answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

Does it say here that God created the waters on day 2 or did He merely manipulate the waters?

How did He manipulate the waters?

Where did the waters come from?

What is an expanse? See **Genesis 1:8**.

Did He separate the waters that would be upon the earth and the waters that would be above the atmosphere (heaven) by placing the atmosphere in between earth and sky? Is

the atmosphere of Earth the first heaven? This is what Genesis 7:11 says, “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.”(NASB) There are many scientists who think the earth was like a greenhouse before the great flood with a canopy over it, keeping out the floodgates of the sky. They also believe there was more atmospheric pressure than what we have now, instead of an atmosphere of 1, it was more like an atmosphere of 2.1.

If our atmosphere is the first heaven, then where is the second heaven?

If outer space is the second heaven, where will be the third heaven, **the place where God chooses to dwell?**

How did God see the land and the waters?

And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Creation Day 3

Please read about day 3 in **Genesis 1:9-13** and answer the following questions in the spaces provided below.

How did God manipulate the waters?

What did God call the dry land?

What did God call the gathering of the waters?

How did God see the land and the seas?

Then, what did God bring forth from the earth?

Please notice here that God brought forth vegetation from the land: plants yielding seed after their kind, fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them. Two key words to think about: kind and seed.

In our understanding and in our own words, what are kinds?

In our understanding and in our own words, what are seeds?

How did God see the vegetation he had brought forth from the earth? And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

Day 4

Please read **Genesis 1:14-19** and answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

What are the lights in the expanse of the heavens? Notice: “Heavens” are plural here.

What did God set the lights in the expanse of the heavens to do in verses 14-15?

What are the two great lights God made in the heavens and what are their functions?

Does it make you wonder, how God could say ...and there was evening and there was morning, day 1, day 2, or even day 3, when God did not make the sun and the moon until day 4? Are we missing something here or is there error in the Scripture?

In addition to the two great lights, what else did God make and place in the heavens to give light on the earth?

How did God see all that He did on day four?

And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

Day 5

Please read **Genesis 1:20-23**.

What did God fill the waters with?

What did God fill the open expanse of the heavens with?

Again, God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind. Something must be very important about kinds. When we get to the loading of the animals into the ark in Genesis 6-7, two of each kind of animal, male and female, will come to the ark to participate in the salvation of their kinds. All kinds of birds, all kinds of animals, all kinds of creeping things of the ground will come to Noah.

What did God command the animals of the sea and the birds of the sky to do in Genesis 1:22? How could these creatures fill the earth?

How did God evaluate all that He had done on day five?

And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

Day 6

Please read **Genesis 1:24-25, 26-31**.

What did God bring forth from the earth to fill the earth with?

Again, God created the living creatures that would live on the land according to their kinds: cattle according to their kind, the creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

How did God look at all He had created so far on day six?

“Then God said,

“Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness...”

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

What was man supposed to do on the earth?

God blessed man and told him to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. He was to rule over the fish, the birds, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

What kind of foodstuff did God give to man to eat?

What kind of foodstuff did God give to the animals to eat?

Again, we have kinds and seeds popping up in the Scripture. God had given man and animals all the plants of the earth that have seed in them and all the fruit of the fruit trees with the seed in them as food to eat.

Do you get the idea that this earth and all that has been created on it has been created for man to live on, to enjoy, to thrive on? It's perfect in the beginning. Nothing either needs to be added or subtracted at this point in time for man to dwell on the earth.

Is this Creation for Mankind Heaven?

If the following two statements are true, then there must be one more addition to this Creation to make it Heaven.

1. Heaven is in God's presence. Hell is just the opposite. It is away from God's presence.
2. Heaven is where God chooses to dwell.

What is that addition?

Does God **dwell** with His Creation in this Garden of Eden utopia He has created perfectly for man?

Day 3 The Garden of Eden

Please read **Genesis 2:1-3, 4-9, 10-14,15-17, 18-25.**

Seems to me that the Garden of Eden must have been a place of sensory delights where all colors of the universe were available to see in the flowers, the birds, the trees, the grasses. It must have been breathtakingly beautiful. Were there sounds of water falling over the rocks or bubbling brooks? Were the birds singing all in perfect harmony and melody with each other? What kind of wonderful smells must have emanated from the flowering vegetation? And oh, the beautiful animals must have had such soulful eyes and such beautiful coats to stroke. What must have pure water tasted like? Can you even imagine how sweet the fruit of the trees of the Garden must have been? The Genesis passage tells us there was an entire land of natural wonders in the Garden. Such joy! Such beauty! Please read **Genesis 2:8-9.**

There were two trees of special note in the Garden of Eden. What were the two trees?

What was Adam told he could do regarding the two trees and what was Adam told he could not do?

Familiarize yourselves with the following Scripture reference:

John 15:4-5

Who is the Vine and who are the branches?

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and from the garden it divided into four rivers.

What are the names of the four rivers? Which two of the four rivers are present in the Middle East today? What happened to the other two rivers?

Please familiarize yourself with the following Scripture references:

John 4:10-11

John 7:38

Who was Jesus according to the two above Scripture references?

“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.”

When I plant a garden in the late spring every year, I usually plan to plant exactly what I will eat in the coming summer months. This takes a personal touch on my part because I don't want to waste the food or the seed on things I won't eat...you know like the jalapeno peppers? When I plant my flowers in the late spring, I must plan for that as well. I have learned over the years that my best flower to survive into the latter fall months and still look beautiful are petunias. So my petunias get great care. You who know me would probably say that my garden shows forth my personal touch. Do you see God's personal touch in the garden He planted in the east in Eden for Adam and Eve?

Again, it was perfect. We also can expect a personal touch from God in how He is preparing our eternal resting place (the final heaven or the New Jerusalem) with Him as well. I wonder if God has magazines titled God's Good House Keeping or God's Better Homes and Gardens. Since we were made in God's image, I would expect that He passed on His creativity and beauty to us. We all love a beautiful garden. I want to be a gardener some day in the New Heaven.

What does Jesus say about this in John 14:2-3?

Let's find out what else was in the Garden of Eden. Look up **Ezekiel 28: 12-13**. Name the different stones that were in the Garden. What metals were also there? Did these precious metals and stones that were in the Garden stay in the Garden or did they escape into the sinful world outside of Eden?

Take a look at the precious onyx stones in **Exodus 28:9-12**. Where were these stones placed? And for what were these stones a reminder?

These stones on the priests' shoulders were memorials in order to remember Eden, to remind the Israelites of the perfect earth and to give them hope. Later on in our study when we see the Israelite priesthood and the traveling tabernacle set up, we will be reminded of Eden where Adam and Eve lived and communed with God on a daily basis. Is the Garden of Eden beginning to sound more like Heaven?

Take a look at these two passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel that do make a whole lot more sense looking back at Eden than before, now that we know our final resting place is in the New Jerusalem.

Isaiah 51:3

Ezekiel 36:35

This is what Anthony Hoekema says in his *The Bible and the Future*.¹¹ "Prophecies of this nature should be understood as descriptions of the new earth...Keeping the doctrine of the new earth in mind...will open up the meaning of large portions of Old Testament prophetic literature in surprisingly new ways."

Look at this remaining verse from **Ephesians 2:19-22** that speaks of the foundation of which Christ is the chief cornerstone.

"So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

What does the New Jerusalem have as its foundation in **Revelation 21:19-22**? And who or what is the Temple?

According to **Genesis 2:15**, God put Man into the garden to cultivate it and keep it.

So if this garden was Heaven, did Mankind have a job in Eden? I thought man only had to work once he had fallen because of the curse? See **Genesis 3:17-19**.

In the garden, the land would respond to man with no effort on the man's part, but when sin entered, man was sent out of the garden and the land would not respond to him as it had in the Garden. He would have to toil on the land. It would not be easy outside the garden to grow necessary foodstuffs because of the thorns and thistles.

¹¹ Anthony A Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 276.

Was God deliberately telling Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because He wanted to see if Adam would be obedient?

Or, can we glean from this **Genesis 3** passage of Scripture, (as we look back at Eden) that God will have work for us when we do get to heaven? He had Adam and Eve to work tending the garden in Eden. When we reach our Eternal Home, (looking forward to the New Jerusalem) it is quite possible that we will have some work to do when we get there. This is certainly different than we have imagined Heaven in the past or at least how I have viewed Heaven in the past.

I've always wondered about this: please read **Luke 23:43** and answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

What word is used in **Luke 23:43** to describe Heaven?

In **Luke 23:43** the Scripture uses the word "Paradise" for Heaven. Now, this word "paradise" comes from a Persian word "pairidaeza," and it means "a walled park" or an "enclosed garden." In the Greek Septuagint or the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word meant the Garden of Eden. Can this be any clearer? In **Revelation 2:7**, God says this, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

So, I ask you one last time, was the Garden of Eden Heaven?

Days 4 and 5

For the next two days I am asking for you to put your thinking caps on and fill in the following chart that has two bookends on either side of it, the bookend of the past in the Garden of Eden and the bookend of the future in the New Jerusalem or our eternal dwelling place with God. The part you will fill in is on the present time when God is reconciling us to Himself in redemption purchased for us by the blood of His Son. The first couple of answers are filled in to give you an idea of what I want. Remember, I spoke of this earlier in our study: Genesis 1 and 2 are God's perfect creation meant for us. Genesis 3 through Revelation 20 are God's redemption of man and Revelation 21 and 22 are about Eden resurrected in the Future New Jerusalem. This may take you some time, but really spend some time thinking about it.¹²

¹² Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois, 2004, pp. 82-85

Past Present Future

The Past – Genesis 1-2 Eden	The Present – Genesis 3- Revelation 20	The Future – Revelation 21-22 Resurrected Eden
Original Mankind	Fallen Mankind: some believe and are transformed	Resurrected Mankind
Original Earth	Fallen Earth with glimmers of original	New resurrect Earth
God delegates reign to innocent Mankind	Disputed reign with God, ha-Satan, and fallen mankind	God delegates reign to righteous Mankind
Mankind is given dominion with the intended stewardship of Earth		Mankind’s dominion fulfilled; redeemed stewardship of Earth
God visiting earth		God living forever with mankind on the New Earth
No Curse (universal perfection and blessing)		No more Curse (greater blessing, deeper perfection, grace unending)
No shame		No shame or potential for shame
Tree of Life in Eden (Mankind can eat)		Tree of life in New Jerusalem (Mankind can eat again forever)
River of life		River of life flows from the throne
Before redemption		After redemption
Sin unknown		Sin forever removed
No death		Death forever removed
Mankind created from the earth		Mankind resurrected from the earth to live on the New Earth
First Adam reigns		Last Adam reigns as God-man, with Mankind as co-heirs
Serpent, ha-Satan, on Earth		Serpent, ha-Satan, removed from Earth, thrown into eternal fire
God walking with humans in the Garden		God dwells face-to-face with humans
God’s glory evident to all, in all		God’s glory forever manifested in all
Unhindered individual worship		Unhindered corporate worship

God's goodness known		God's goodness forever celebrated
Creation and Mankind perfect		Creation and Mankind restored to perfection
Mankind names, tends & rules the animals Ground fertile, vegetation lush		Animals and Mankind live in complete harmony Ground fertile, vegetation thrives
Abundant food and water		Abundant food and water
Restfulness, satisfaction in labor Innocence, closeness to God Paradise Mankind in ideal place		Enhanced restfulness joy in labor Righteousness (intimacy with God); complete righteousness in Christ Paradise regained and magnified Man restored to ideal place
Mankind able either to sin or not to sin		Mankind unable to sin, permanently empowered
Naked in innocence One marriage (Adam and Eve) Marriage perfect Beginning of human culture Mankind learns, creates in purity		Clothed with righteousness One marriage (Christ & Church) Marriage perfect, unhindered Purification and eternal Expansion of culture
God's plan for Mankind and Earth revealed	God's plan delayed and enriched	God's plan for Mankind and Earth realized