

Lesson 3 From Heaven to Heaven

This will be a very different lesson for you. Most of this lesson is reading with very few questions. I have presented this lesson in this fashion so that you will have plenty of time to think and answer those questions. I have also purposely written this body of information so that you have a running history of Mankind from the time of Man's banishment from God's presence to Man's acceptance into God's presence once again.

Days 1 and 2

Sin in the Garden

So, where are we in our journey? That's right: Adam has been created, made from the dust of the ground. Previously to Adam's beginning, God has created all foliage and plant life and animals and birds and sea creatures. God has brought all of the land animals and birds and sea creatures to the man to see what he would call each one of them. Out of everything God already created there was not found a suitable helper for Adam. So, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the first man, Adam. While Adam was asleep, God performed the first surgery on him and took one of Adam's ribs and fashioned a woman from it. Her name was Eve and she completed him. Do you suppose Adam exclaimed "Wow-Man" when God introduced her to Adam and that is why she was called "woman?" I'm so puny sometimes. No, the Scripture says she was called "woman" because she was taken out of man. Back when there was only Adam, God said to him, that he could eat of any tree of the Garden, but not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. For in the day that he would eat of it, he would surely die. We are not told how this message made it to Eve's ears, but Adam probably told her. Only Eve when talking to the Serpent, did not get it quite right, did she? When the serpent came along and noticed that she was gazing at the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he asked her, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" She answered the Serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'you shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

What was it that she did not get correct?

Why was she gazing at that tree?

God had placed the pair, Adam and Eve, in a perfect and sinless environment, in a garden east of Eden. Adam had probably told Eve what God had told him: he could eat of the fruit of any tree in the garden, but this one particular tree called “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he was not to eat.” There was no mention of touching it or not touching it. Eve added that in. Also, it is interesting that she did not name the tree the same, but added its location instead: in the middle of the garden. The Serpent then cast doubt on God’s character by implying God was a liar by saying, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Did you get what the Serpent was doing here?

What or who is the source of the women’s temptation here? Don’t answer this briefly? I want you to think here.

What or who is the source of our temptations?

We all know what happens to Eve and then Adam here. Why do they sin?

To what were their eyes opened, when they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?

What is the punishment for Eve for eating fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? What is her sentence? Was her punishment/sentence fair? Or, did the sentence seem unfair for what she did?

What is the punishment or sentence for Adam? Was his punishment/ sentence fair? Or, did the sentence seem unfair in light of the sin committed?

What is the punishment or sentence for the Serpent? Was his punishment/ sentence fair? Or, did the sentence seem unfair or unequal to the infraction committed?

What does this tell you about the Serpent’s ways, even for us today?

What does this tell you about ha-Satan's tactics today?

Do you think ha-Satan ever cries out, "unfair!" "unfair!?" What kind of doubt concerning God's character does ha-Satan bring into the light?

What is the prophecy concerning the seed of the woman, Eve?

What is the prophecy concerning the seed of the Serpent, ha-Satan?

What does bruising the heel of the woman's seed mean?

What does bruising the head of the Serpent's seed mean?

We have these "seeds" again, here. With what did God cover Adam and Eve's nakedness?

How did God acquire the covering for their nakedness?

Okay, so Adam and Eve are banned from the Garden of Eden by two cherubim guarding the East entrance to the Garden. Why?

At this point, we know that Adam and Eve, because of their sin, no longer have direct access to God. If the Garden of Eden is Heaven, then God is kicking them not only out of the Garden of Eden and Heaven, but out of His presence, as well. Earlier, in the text, I told you I thought God kicked ha-Satan and one-third of the angels out of Heaven and to the earth in Eternity Past. If it didn't happen in Eternity Past, then certainly it should have happened at the same time as He kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden. Yes, these are my thoughts, my sense of fairness on Adam and Eve's part: the Serpent should not be allowed in God's presence. However, we find later in the Scripture in the book of Job that ha-Satan still has access to God's presence so he can accuse Job before God. This doesn't make sense, does it? How could this be? Could ha-Satan, being a spiritual being, not be consumed in God's presence because he has no physical substance and therefore no sentence of death for his iniquities and no banishment, either? Or, could it be, the fall of ha-Satan and one-third of the heavenly host is yet future to the fall of man in the Garden? If the book of Revelation

is chronological, then it would seem that the fall of ha-Satan and one-third of the heavenly hosts happens in chapter 12, which is well into the Great Tribulation time period, all still future to us. Yet again, the book of Job happens after the garden, after Adam and Eve, after the fall of man, and ha-Satan is called into God's presence. Let's remember this: when we think about time and think of being outside of time, which eternity encompasses, then things will always be kind of weird. All we can say with certainty right now is that ha-Satan does not have a corporal body in our 3½ dimensions that we live in and heaven is outside our time domain and does not play by the same time rules as we do. Unless God gives us a revelation here, I don't think we are going to solve this great mystery.

Days 3 through 5

From Sin on the Earth to Sin on the Earth to God's Presence Once Again

So, now, we fast-forward through 11 generations of Mankind, all originating from Adam. We come to the time of Noah and his three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth. God finds a righteous man in Noah, but God is at enmity with the rest of human kind as their sin has become utterly wicked. He looks back on His covenant He made with Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3:15** and knows that He must keep the lineage of Adam alive to bring about the promise of the Messiah through the seed of the woman, Eve. So He saves Noah and his family from the demise He is planning for the rest of Mankind and He does just that: He keeps His promise through the line of Shem, Noah's son. So God instructs Noah to build a boat, an ark, more precisely and his family and all the species of the animals aboard the ark are carried through the Flood safely. The rest of Mankind is destroyed. On the other side of the Flood, Ham and Shem and Japheth do as God asks them to do and they become fruitful and they multiply the human population. God also tells them to move out from their comfy zone, from their origin, to fill the earth. However, in very short order, men have become wicked again and they stay conglomerated in a city they are building with a tower to the "**heavens.**" Does what we have looked at here, change your former thoughts about why they were building a tower to the "**heavens?**"

We all know the story of Babel. Tell me what pronoun is used for GOD in **Genesis 11:7**? What is the Godhead concerned about here?

What does the Godhead do to the men and women of this city in which they all spoke the same language and they all used the same words?

What you find after the Tower of Babel account in **Genesis 11** are the records of the generations of Shem, one of Noah's sons. Shem's offspring migrated into the land of

what we know today to be the Middle East. Abram is one of Shem's relatives. Abram was a pagan worshipping pagan gods within a pagan culture. Abram worshiped other gods, not the GOD who brought the rains of the Great Flood. When GOD first singled out Abram, Abram was already old. He was married to one woman, also elderly and beyond the age of bearing a child. What I want you to understand here is that by singling out a member of Shem's offspring to bless in **Genesis 12:1-3** God is narrowing down the line once again through which He will bring the seed of the Messiah. The Shemites became the Semites later on and this term is what is used for the Jewish people today.

Have you ever heard the term, anti-Semitic? What does this term mean?

Genesis 12- 15 tells us that GOD made a covenant with Abram because Abram believed GOD and was obedient to Him to move out of his comfort zone out from the idolatrous city of Ur of the Chaldeans and go to a land GOD would show him. Abram did not know where he was going when he started out. He just moved and trusted GOD to lead the way.

What was the danger of men staying in the same city, speaking the same language, using the same words, and worshipping pagan gods, all within several generations of the Flood? What are the connections that are coming together for you in reading these Bible stories now? Please don't bypass this; this is an extremely important understanding for you to have. In other words, how do the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and God's calling of one man, Abram, tie together for you at this time? Please write your thoughts below:

The flood was 1656 years from Adam's creation. Shem was 100 years old when the flood came and he remained alive after the Flood for another 600 years. Shem and Abram's lives overlapped. Many Jews believe Shem was Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who met Abram in **Genesis 14** and who brought out bread and wine and blessed Abram of God Most High. In **Genesis 14:18** we are told that Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High. In **Hebrews 7** in the New Testament, we are told that Jesus was a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, a permanent priesthood, held forever. Did I mention the bread and the wine? What do you take from all of this?¹³

¹³ The Overlapping of the Patriarchs' Lives, The New Inductive Study Bible NASB, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 2000, p. 10.

Twelve hundred years after Adam's Creation, GOD once again, narrows the field for the promised Messiah to enter time through a man named Abram, a descendant of Shem, who was a descendant of Adam. GOD calls him to leave his home and go where GOD would show him approximately 344 years after the Flood. In 344 years from the Flood, the estimates of people alive at that time who had populated the earth range from several hundred thousand to over 5 million.¹⁴ Can you imagine all the sin that the God-fearing Shem saw on this earth in his 600 years after the flood? Whoa! Whoa!

Turn in your Bible to **Genesis 15** and read the entire chapter and answer the questions in the spaces provided below:

In **Genesis 15:1** God comes to Abram in a dream. God tells Abram to not be afraid for He is a shield to Abram. The word used here for "shield" in the Hebrew is "magan." What do you think God is saying to Abram here?

GOD also tells Abram his reward (from GOD) will be very great. Do you remember that Abram and Sarai's union had not resulted in any offspring? Abram reminds GOD that He has no offspring and that he will have to leave his inheritance to one of his servants. "Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.'" What is Abram's great reward? Again, really think on this.

GOD took Abram outside in the dark and told him to look at the stars and count them if he was able. Of course, Abram couldn't count them. God tells him the number of his descendants will be like the number of the stars that he could not count. The word used here for "descendants" in the Hebrew is the same word used for "seed." There we go again. Those "seeds" keep popping up in the text. Ha! Ha! Did you get my "puny" meaning? Then the Scripture says something profound: "Then he "believed" in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Where have you heard the word "righteous" before in our study so far? See **Genesis 6:9** and also **Genesis 7:1**. Once again, what is GOD doing here in **Genesis 15**? Do you think that Abram was without sin? What is the key to Abram's reward? Is Abram face to face here with God? I thought no man could see God's face and live.

¹⁴ World's Population Since Creation, Lambert Dolphin, idolphim.org, July 31, 2007.

In this **Genesis 15** chapter God promises Abram that a nation (descendant(s)) will come from his seed. He also promises Abram that the Messiah will come from his seed. Finally, God promises Abram that his descendants, his seed, will inherit a very special piece of land “from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.” This land God promised Abram was at that time inhabited by the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. God also tells Abram that he will not see the fulfillment of this promise of the land in his lifetime. Before this day and time, Abram’s descendants will spend time in a land that does not belong to them. In this land, his descendants will be slaves for 400 years. When these 400 years are complete and the iniquity of the above ten nations are complete or full, then Abram’s descendants will take possession of this land.

Let’s fast forward again, to the time when the promise of a son is fulfilled in Abram’s life. The name of Abram’s son of promise is Isaac. “Isaac” in the Hebrew means laughter. When Sarai, being old, hears the Lord tell Abram that he will have a son by her womb in a year’s time, Sarai laughs. In **Genesis 17**, God changes Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah. Abram’s name has gone from “exalted father,” to Abraham or “father of a multitude.” Sarai’s name has gone from Sarai to Sarah, meaning “princess” and she will be mother to multiple nations.” Abraham will be 100 years old when the son of promise is born and Sarah will be 90 years old.

You might be asking yourself why are we going over the entire book of Genesis here and what all of this has to do with our primary objective of looking at Heaven? Stay tuned to the end of this paragraph and I think it will become clear as to why I have chosen this way to lead you into an understanding of Heaven. From Abraham’s offspring, the son of promise Isaac has two sons, Esau and Jacob. God very clearly chooses Jacob over Esau for the seed of the Messiah to pass through to the later generations. Jacob was the younger of the twins. Jacob has 12 sons and one daughter from his union with two wives and two concubines. Jacob wrestles with the Lord in the wilderness and the Lord prevails over him in **Genesis 35**. It is here in the wilderness where God changes Jacob’s name to “Israel.” “Israel” in the Hebrew means “He who wrestles with God.” Of these twelve sons that Jacob begets, God narrows down the Messiah’s seed once again to pass through Judah, one of Jacob’s sons. The entire family (including all 12 tribes) moves to Egypt for 430 years where they are slaves for 400 of those years. Do you remember God’s revelation to Abram in **Genesis 15** in which He tells Abram that his descendants will spend time in another nation’s land for 400 years? During this time in Egypt, Jacob’s family becomes the nation of Israel. Some scholars estimate there were as many as 6 million (2 million men and 4 million women and children) Israelites who came out of slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses. After God’s miraculous deliverance of the Israelite nation from the Egyptian armies and after they are on their way to the land promised to Abram’s descendants in **Genesis 15**, Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God on Mt. Sinai. During the two encounters with God on the Mountain to receive the Ten Commandments, Moses also receives

the plans to the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system that the Israelites are to use to approach God. The tabernacle is to be the dwelling place of God as He lives among His people. All of these Israelites who escaped Egypt “believed” in GOD and “obeyed” His commands to sacrifice a lamb and place the lamb’s blood on the door posts of their homes so that the angel of death would pass over them and spare their firstborns on the night of the first Passover in Egypt. By “belief” and “obedience” to their God the Israelites come into a relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as a nation. If Heaven is being in the presence of God then the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system, are the means for the Israelites on earth to come into His presence once again. What we study next week by looking at this temporary dwelling place of God is the shadow on earth of what is really going on in heaven, a pattern of what heaven will be like when we are allowed into His presence once again.