

## Unseen Realm- Session 12- God's Comprehensive Plan for Humanity

\*All Bible references are from NASB unless noted otherwise.

### The Creation of Mankind- His Earthly Imagers

1. The presentation of Genesis chapter 1 is directed towards the creation and preparation of heavens and an earth in order for it to be formed for God's new human family. The earth needed to be shaped and formed specifically to accommodate for our physical limitations. This new earth (ground) was created to be our home and in order to show this, God created Adam out of this same physical ground. The Hebrew word for ground is *adamah* and as we know the first man is named *Adam* (Genesis 2:7, 9; 3:19, 23).

*The heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind.* (Ps. 115:16 NET)

2. We learned that the "angelic" divine council already existed when the physical earth was created.

*"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements-- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? <sup>6</sup> On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, <sup>7</sup> when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"* (Job 38:4-7 ESV)

3. God's plan involved His invitation to the heavenly (unseen realm) divine council to join Him in seeing the creation of an earthly family who would also be imagers of God Himself. This would allow humanity to be God's representatives (vice regents) in establishing God's rulership throughout the entire earth.

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* (Gen. 1:26)<sup>1</sup>

*Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever "* (Gen. 3:22)

<sup>6</sup> *Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. <sup>7</sup> He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"* (Isaiah 6:6-8)

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<sup>1</sup> The plural form of the verb has been the subject of much discussion through the years, and not surprisingly several suggestions have been put forward. Many Christian theologians interpret it as an early hint of plurality within the Godhead, but this view imposes later trinitarian concepts on the ancient text. Some have suggested the plural verb indicates majesty, but the plural of majesty is not used with verbs. C. Westermann (Genesis, 1:145) argues for a plural of "deliberation" here, but his proposed examples of this use (2 Sam 24:14; Isa 6:8) do not actually support his theory. In 2 Sam 24:14 David uses the plural as representative of all Israel, and in Isa 6:8 the LORD speaks on behalf of his heavenly court. In its ancient Israelite context, the plural is most naturally understood as referring to God and his heavenly court (see 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6; Isa 6:1–8). (The most well-known members of this court are God's messengers, or angels. In Gen 3:5 the serpent may refer to this group as "gods/divine beings." See the note on the word "evil" in 3:5.) **If this is the case, God invites the heavenly court to participate in the creation of humankind (perhaps in the role of offering praise, see Job 38:7), but he himself is the one who does the actual creative work (v. 27).** Of course, this view does assume that the members of the heavenly court possess the divine "image" in some way. **Since the image is closely associated with rulership, perhaps they share the divine image in that they, together with God and under his royal authority, are the executive authority over the world.** (from the NET version notes on Genesis 1:26.

#### 4. What does it mean to be created in God's image? (Genesis 1:27; 9:6)

<sup>1:27</sup> *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

<sup>9:6</sup> *Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.<sup>7</sup> "As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." (Gen. 9:6-7; cf. 5:1, 3)*

- a. Intelligence? Animals?
- b. Reasoning ability?
- c. Emotions? Animals? (grief)
- d. The ability to commune with God?
- e. Self-awareness (sentience)? Animals?
- f. Language/communication ability? Animals?
- g. The presence of a soul or spirit (or both)? Animals? (Mankind has "breath of life"- Gen 2:7; Both man and animal have a *nephesh*/soul- Gen 1:30; 2:7; "spirit"- 7:15; 21-22).
- h. The conscience?
- i. Free will?<sup>2</sup>
- j. Morality? (knowledge of good and evil came after Gen 3 fall)
- k. Physical likeness? (Mormonism- D&C 130:22; Kenneth Copeland- 6'3"- Isaiah 40:12; Contrast John 4:24; Isaiah 31:33 and other anthropomorphisms- Psalm 91:4- wings?; 110:1- hands?)
- l. Both men and women are included
- m. All are not equally present in all human beings at all times (babies, mentally handicapped)
- n. Some are not unique to human beings (animals have some of these qualities)<sup>3</sup>
- o. There are pro-life ramifications for defining the image of God incorrectly

"What makes man the image of God is not that corporeal man stands as an analogy of a corporeal God; for the image does not primarily mean similarity, but the representation of the one who is imaged in a place where he is not.... According to Gen 1:26ff, man is set on earth in order to be the **representative** there of the absent God who is nevertheless present by His image (D.J.A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 87).

#### 5. What is the direct outcome of being God's vice-regent? (Genesis 1:28)

<sup>28</sup> *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

- a. Reproduce and fill the earth with other imagers
- b. Subdue the earth (from the NET notes: "harness its potential and use its resources for your benefit.")
- c. Rule and/or govern (similar to 1 Cor 6:3 where we adjudicate the world and angels)
- d. In the commands given after the flood (Gen 9:1-7), God repeats Himself in reminding them to be fruitful and multiply (9:1, 7), but DOES NOT reiterate the command to rule. Some scholars suggest that mankind lost the immediate ability to fulfill their role as rulers due to sin. They must wait until they are redeemed and made perfect by Jesus who once again grants believers to rule with Him (Revelation 1:26-27; 3:21; 20:4).

<sup>2</sup> This list up to this point is from the Unseen Realm, page 40.

<sup>3</sup> Michael S. Heiser, "[Image of God](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

## The Creation of Mankind- The Garden and Gate Between Heaven and Earth

1. After the introduction of Genesis 1, the writer explains how the creation's history began to unfold.

<sup>1</sup> Thus the *heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts*. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

<sup>4</sup> ¶ This is the **account** (*toledot*- "generations") of the *heavens and the earth* when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. (Gen. 2:1-4)

These ten *toledot*, translated "generations" in the American Standard Version, occur in Gen. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 11:10 and 27; 25:12 and 19; 36:1 (and 9); 37:2.

- a. History of heavens and earth- 2:4-4:26
- b. History of mankind (Adam through Noah)- 5:1,2-6:8
- c. History of Noah through curse of his son Ham (after the flood)- 6:9-9:29
- d. History of flood survivors (Noah and three sons' families to Babel)- 10:1-11:9
- e. History Shem to Terah- 11:10-26
- f. History of Terah (father of Abraham)- 11:27-25:11
- g. History of Ishmael- 25:12-18
- h. History of Isaac- 25:19-35:29
- i. History of Esau- 36:1-37:1
- j. History of Jacob- 37:2-50:26<sup>4</sup>

2. God created the garden as a location for His new created earthly family to live in communion with Him

- a. The garden/orchard (place of delight and luxury) was not called Eden, but was in the location of a region called Eden.
- b. This was place where God could dwell with His earthly family as well as commune with His heavenly family also.
- c. God "rested" (literal Hebrew *noach*) the man and woman there to work and keep/guard the sacred space (Genesis 2:15).
- d. Mankind was to work/serve in the garden. Similar wording is used of those who later served/worked in the tabernacle as priests (Numbers 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6).
- e. Mankind was to keep/guard the sacred earthly space of God's dwelling. This is similar wording to the Cherub would guard it after the fall (3:24).
- f. Mankind's task was to cultivate and keep the garden and take the concept of Eden and righteously spread through the whole earth as they multiplied and ruled over all of the earth.
- g. In ancient Near Eastern religious thinking, lush gardens with rivers and mountains were the dwelling places of the gods. This same imagery appears in Isaiah 14:13 and Ezekiel 28:13-14. See parallels below. **Which came first? The book of Genesis or Near Eastern mythology?**
- h. The Greek word referencing the garden of Eden is "paradise". This idea reappears in the NT where Jesus speaks about the place of the righteous as paradise (Luke 23:43; Rev 2:7; Paul visited the heavenly version of this- 2 Corinthians 12:4). The new Edenic vision will be accomplished through the work of gospel.

<sup>4</sup> "The *Toledot* of the Book of Genesis and Their Redemptive-Historical Significance," *CTJ* 5 (1970): 184-189.

### Ancient Near Eastern Parallels of Garden/Mountains as the Dwelling Place of the Gods

The proliferation of such motifs in the Ancient Near East cannot be ignored. The description of Eden in Gen 2:25–3:24 draws heavily on the mythic garden-of-God theme but as is the case elsewhere in the Yahwistic narrative, there is a blend of mythic and historical elements. The mythic elements break through the narrative sufficiently to suggest that Eden was not simply a human paradise which had been lost through disobedience. Rather it portrays a divine dwelling within the human, historical context. It is certainly a place set apart from the world as humans have experienced it, but it nevertheless is meant to be understood as an historical entity. The garden of Eden serves as the setting for a drama which explores the relationship between the divine and human worlds, a relationship which in Israelite experience was played out in the context of history.<sup>5</sup>

The description of the garden of Eden in Gen 2:4b–3:24 contains many of these motifs. These include the unmediated presence of the deity, the issuing of divine decrees (3:14–19, 22–24), the source of the subterranean life-giving waters which supply the earth (2:6, 10–14), abundant fertility, and trees of supernatural qualities and great beauty (2:9). Eden should not be understood as a garden planted strictly for the habitation of humans. It is essentially Yahweh's garden which humans were invited to enjoy and cultivate. The narrative is therefore concerned with the issue of humankind entering and dwelling within the presence of deity.<sup>6</sup>

The main feature of the garden of God theme is the presence of the deity, and in another Ugaritic myth, El's dwelling place is called *phr m'd*, or "appointed assembly" (CTA 3.5.12–17; 4.4.20–24), much like the assumed divine assembly with which God converses (Gen 1:26; 3:22; Wray and Mobley, *The Birth of Satan*, 48; Mullen, *The Divine Council*). The similarities are impressive; the garden of Eden is not meant to be just a habitation for humanity, but a divine dwelling place where humanity is in the presence of God (Soggin, "The Fall of Man in the Third Chapter of Genesis").

D. A. Neal & John Anthony Dunne, "Eden, Garden of," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

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<sup>5</sup> Howard N. Wallace, "[Eden, Garden of \(Place\)](#)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 282.

<sup>6</sup> Howard N. Wallace, "[Garden of God \(Place\)](#)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 907.