

PLAN AND PURPOSE BIBLE LESSON #III-2—Genesis 2-4

(Read Genesis 2:1-3) These three verses actually complete chapter 1. After working six days, or time periods, to create the universe and the earth and all that is in it, God rested on the seventh day or time period. Verse 3 says that He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. The word “sanctified” means “set apart.” He set this day apart from the rest of the days as it was to be different from the other six days. Later, when we study His law, we will see that He extended this sanctification from not only the seventh day, but the seventh year and then the seventh seven year period.

(Read Genesis 2:4-6) To better understand what we read in Genesis, remember that Moses is looking back and writing about things that have already happened. He is not recording these things as they are happening. It is easy for us to take things for granted. To fully grasp how truly wondrous the creation is, I believe one has to study things like biology and zoology to appreciate not only the very intricate detail of the construction of plant systems and the animal anatomy, but how everything actually works.

(Read Genesis 2:7) There is a great deal of information in this verse, or at least it is the foundation of a great deal of information. First, we’re told that God formed man of the dust of the ground. This is somewhat easy for us to understand as we all witness what happens to animals, including man, when they die. The bodies literally return to the dust of the ground if left to do so. We are made of the same elements that we find in the soil. Let me add an additional element to the story. (Read Leviticus 25:23, 24) God is giving the Israelites instructions as to how they were to live in the land of Canaan. They were to be given land that they could work to make their living and then they could pass it down to their descendents as an inheritance, but they could not sell the land. They could sell the use of it, though not for more than 49 years, but they could not sell the land to someone outside their family. The land belonged to God. Verse 24 says that they were to grant a redemption for the land. If they sold the use of the land to pay a debt, for example, it was to return to the original owner in the year of Jubilee (49th year), but it could be redeemed any time up to the Jubilee. The same thing applied to the people themselves, should they sell themselves or be sold to pay a debt, for example, they were to be freed in the Jubilee, but could be redeemed, or purchased back, by a kinsman redeemer anytime. The point I want to make is that we are made of the land, the soil, or the dust of the earth. Therefore, we belong to God. However, we could be sold, or we could sell ourselves, but we can be redeemed by a kinsman redeemer. When Adam sinned, we were all sold to sin. When Jesus Christ, our kinsman Redeemer, because He was a man like us, died on the cross, He paid our price of redemption. There was always a redemption granted for the land, i.e. each of us. There was also a second redemption exercised by the death of our Saviour, but we will discuss that later in our studies.

I think sometimes we take things a little too much for granted when we read this verse 7. Few of us really comprehend just how this “forming” produced all of the systems that make up our body. To even think that our bodies could have started by accident, and then by evolution developed into the extremely complex system that comprises our bodies, defies all reason.

Then, the thing that defies all scientific reasoning, God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Man “might” be able to duplicate all of the elements of the structure of the human body, but the one thing science cannot do is to make it live. The Hebrew word here translated “soul” is *nephesh*. According to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, *nephesh* is defined as “a breathing creature, i.e. animal or (abstr.) vitality.” I think of it as “life”, i.e. man became a living life. I recently was talking to a doctor who practices Chinese medicine. He told me that the Chinese have a name for it—Chee. He explained that while we have the necessities for life in our bodies such as blood, oxygen, etc., chee is what makes the heart to pump and the blood to flow, makes the lungs to expand and contract to move air in and out of our body, etc. I look at this word “soul” as the same thing, it is the animation, the life, of the various organs and systems of our body. It is not, as is often taught, some separate part of us that lives on after the body dies. It is the life itself and when the body dies, it ceases to exist. I have served on a rescue squad for a number of years and have realized that there are times when the heart and the breathing has stopped in a person, just forcing the body to breath and the heart to pump does not assure life. Sometimes that animation can be re-ignited, so to speak, and sometimes not, though the procedure used from one person to another may be the same. The miracle of “life” is held exclusively in the hands of God, not man.

(Read Genesis 2:8-14)) We don’t know if the “dry land” of Gen. 1:10 was all one piece of land or whether it was separated into the continents that we know today, or not. It is interesting, if you look at a globe of the world, and in your imagination are able to push all of the land masses together, they will fit into each other as if they were parts of a puzzle put together. It would seem as we read this portion of scripture that there was just one large land mass, or it is talking about one particular area of the earth to the exclusion of all the rest. We don’t know for sure the location of “Eden” where God planted the garden. I think it is fairly commonly believed that it was probably in what we know as the Mesopotamian area today. This seems to be supported by Moses’ references to lands and rivers he was familiar with in his day. Hiddekel is another name for the Tigris River, so if we are talking about the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, the Pison River would have been west of the Euphrates and the Gihon would have been east of the Tigris.

(Read Genesis 2:15-17) God put man, or Adam in the garden to dress and till it and told him he could freely eat of any of the fruit of any of the trees with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since God is sovereign, His word is law. So when He

commanded Adam to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this was law. The consequence, or judgment, for violation of that law was death, or literally “dying, you shall die,” i.e. become mortal.

(Read Genesis 2:18-25) God formed all of the animals and the fowls and He gave Adam the tremendous job of naming them all. But not one of the animals was suitable for a help meet for Adam. The margin of my Bible says “help meet” means “helper comparable to him.”

So we are told that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and He removed one of Adam’s ribs and closed up the flesh (first surgical operation under an anesthesia), and then, using the rib, God made a woman and brought her to Adam. Verse 24 is of particular importance on two points: man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. As we study God’s law, keep these points in mind as see how they are part of the law.

(Read Genesis 3:1-6) There is a great deal of argument as to what or who the serpent was and what all happened here. It is not my intent to enter into any of the argument as I think we can glean what we need by just taking what is written. We’re told that the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD had made. This tells me that whatever it was, God had made it and apparently did so along with the beasts of the field. The word serpent, according to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, is from the Hebrew word *nachash* meaning a snake (from its hiss) and comes from another word that is spelled the same way in English which means “to hiss, i.e. whisper a (magic) spell; gen. to prognosticate.”

Notice some of the difference in what Eve says that God said and what we’re told He said in Gen. 2:16-17. In 2:16, God said that they could “freely” eat of any tree of the garden. When Eve answered the serpents query, she left out this emphatic adverb. Then she likewise leaves out the emphatic adverb “surely” that is in 2:17 when she repeats what God said in 3:3. But the important point here is that the serpent lied when he told Eve **“Ye shall not surely die.”** The Companion Bible comments on this statement saying, “This has become the foundation of Spiritism and Traditional belief as to death.” Most people desperately want to believe this lie, as no one wants to believe they will actually die.

In I John 2:15-16, we find the following: **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”** These three temptations are the basic source of all sin. So that we know that they are not new, compare these with Gen. 3:6. **“Lust of the flesh” = “good for food.” “Lust of the eyes” = “pleasant to the eyes.” “Pride of life” = “desired to make one wise.”** Adam, though his wife ate of the forbidden fruit first and then gave it to her husband, has to bear the responsibility for this sin since it was to him that God gave the commandment.

(Read Genesis 3:7-21) They were naked before they ate of the forbidden fruit, but something changed once they had eaten. I would speculate that in being made in the image of

God, there could have been a glory surrounding them that was lost when they became disobedient so that now they were ashamed of their nakedness. They were certainly ashamed when they heard the voice of God in the garden and hid. Note that Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. None escaped judgment. God started with the serpent, then Eve and then Adam. But note the last of verse 19. The death sentence for disobedience is clearly stated here though in a unique way. The apostle John tells us in I John 3:4, **“sin is the transgression of the law.”** As we have said already, God’s Word is law and Adam and Eve clearly transgressed God’s Word. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 6:23 **“the wages of sin is death.”** This is what God had told Adam, so in telling him now **“for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”** we see that Adam and Eve became mortal, i.e. they began the process of dying.

But mortality not only affected them—each of us are going to die also because of their sin. (Read Rom. 5:12) If we substituted the word mortality for the word death, we might understand it better. But Paul is telling us that because Adam sinned, he became mortal and because he became mortal, we are mortal, i.e. we die because Adam sinned. To use a term the Apostle Paul used, Adam’s sin was imputed to us, i.e. not only was Adam held responsible for his sin, we are being held responsible as well. We are mortal because of Adam’s sin. But there is more. We’re told that because we are mortal, or that we are going to die, this causes us to sin. The words “for that” are a mistranslation. We have heard the saying, “you only die once.” This was apparently what the translators believed which caused them to mistranslate. The truth is we can die twice. Rev. 20 speaks of a second death which we will study in more detail when we reach that point in our study. But because the translators apparently did not understand this, they changed the meaning of the Greek words to say “for that” or basically “because” which is the way that it is usually understood.

The Greek words that are translated “for that” are “eph’ ho.” Eph’ or Epi means “on, upon, or over.” Ho means “which.” So it should have been translated “on which.” “On which” denotes a result to follow, in this case, all have sinned as a result of death, or mortality, passing on them. Verse 14 verifies this as does Heb. 2:15.

We certainly die because we sin as death is the end penalty for sin. (Read Rom. 6:23) But the mortal death we die is because Adam sinned, the second death is the result of our own sins. However, before we leave this subject, we need to leave on a good note. (Read Rom. 5:18) Note that the same number on which the judgment (mortality) came is the same number that will be justified. We’ll discuss this considerably more as we proceed with our study.

Some people believe that God had to change his plan for mankind when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him. It is very important that we understand from this point on the sovereignty of our God.

(Read Isa. 45:5-7) We can ask ourselves the question, Did Adam and Eve have a choice as to whether they disobeyed God or not? This is a very difficult question to answer. Could we even think that God caused Adam to sin, i.e. transgress His law? (Read I John 3:4) For

discussion sake, what would be better, Adam and Eve spending eternity in the garden, or the billions of people who have been born since, which includes each of us, spending eternity in the garden? For the moment, let's consider the possibility that it was God's plan that Adam and Eve would disobey. Does this mean that God sinned? The verb "to sin" is translated from the Hebrew word "chata" in the Old Testament and the Greek word "hamartano" in the New Testament. They both have the same meaning: "to err or to miss the mark." In the book of Judges, there is a story in chapters 19 and 20 of the men of the tribe of Benjamin in the city of Gibeah committing a very serious crime against a Levite man and his concubine that caused the rest of Israel to come against the tribe of Benjamin in battle. We're told that among the army of Benjamin, there were 700 chosen men. (Read Judges 20:16) The word "miss" at the end of the verse is translated from the same word, "chata" that the word "sin" is translated from. Going back to what happened in the Garden of Eden, if we say that God caused Adam and Eve to sin, He did not miss His mark, did he? So God did not sin, right? Remember, sin is transgression of the law. God did not break any laws. But, some will say that it is evil for someone to cause someone else to do evil. From our limited perspective, this sounds reasonable. But let's try to look at the bigger picture, the bigger plan, God's plan. (Read Malachi 3:6) If God does not change, then the plan that He started with would have to be the one He still has. Yet, He told Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This would appear to be what He wanted Adam to do. So what makes Him cause Adam and Eve to violate His law on the one hand, yet want them not to do so on the other?

In the New Testament, this plan, as expressed by His causing Adam and Eve to sin, and His will, as expressed by His commanding Adam and Eve not to sin, is expressed by two different Greek words, both of which are translated "will." The Greek word "*Thelema*" means "will, or wish." (Read Matt. 6:10-13) In verse 10, God's will, His wish, or His desire is that all men would be righteous (His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.). However, we know that it is not happening now, but Jesus is telling us to pray that it will happen. The Greek word "*Boulema*" means "purpose," but is translated "will" in Romans 9:19. The apostle Paul, is using the Egyptian Pharaoh of Moses' time to show God's sovereignty and he quotes Exodus 9:16 in Rom. 9:17 (Read). He continues in verse 18 to promote God's sovereignty knowing that this is sure to bring up a question. He asks the question himself in verse 19 (Read). The word "will" here is translated from the word "*boulema*." The argument then is, if Pharaoh did what he did because God made him do it, how does God find fault with Pharaoh since nobody, including the Pharaoh, can resist His will, or more accurately, His purpose. This is a good argument that we'll be discussing more later, but for now we need to recognize that God's "will" and His "purpose or plan" are not necessarily the same thing. His will can be resisted, His plan, or purpose cannot be.

To say then that God purposed, or planned for Adam and Eve to die makes it not look so good for God in our eyes. But let's go back to our discussion question. "What would be better,

Adam and Eve spending eternity in the garden, or the billions of people who have been born since, including each of us, spending eternity in the garden with them? This, in a sense, is the big picture. What may appear to us as unjust when we see the small picture, changes 180° when we look at the big picture. The big picture is God's plan and He is willing to pay the price for the big picture.

(Read Genesis 3:22-24) Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden because they had become sinners. The garden represented the presence of God. Any non-perfection could not be tolerated. It is from this point that the process of returning to that perfection first enjoyed by Adam and Eve begins. But the end result will be that all of mankind will have returned to that perfection as well. This process is the story the Bible presents to us.

(Read Genesis 4:1-7) There are differences of opinion concerning the birth of Cain. However, it appears to me that the Bible is pretty straightforward that Cain was Adam and Eve's firstborn son. Abel was the second born. We're not told just why God had respect to Abel's offering, but not Cain's, but possibly we can determine why by looking at a couple of other scriptures. Heb. 11:4 tells us, **By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.**" This tells us Abel's offering was more excellent, but we're told that by the offering he obtained witness that he was righteous. Jude 11 tells us, **"Woe unto them! (speaking of some very sinful men) for they have gone the way of Cain."** We're still not told exactly what that way was, but this tells us that it wasn't as much the sacrifice as it was the attitude that Cain apparently had.

(Read Genesis 4:8-15) This attitude of Cain's ultimately led him to murder his brother Abel. I John 3:12 tells us that the reason for Cain murdering his brother was **"because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."** God's punishment to Cain was to cause him to be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth and to cause the ground to not yield its full strength when Cain tilled it. Cain realized this meant that he would be driven from the face of the LORD and that he would be in danger of being killed as well. We're told that God put a mark on Cain to protect him, but we're not told what was meant by this mark.

(Read Gen. 4:16-24) Nod means "wandering." We are given a short genealogy of Cain and his family. There is reason to believe that the civilization started here made substantial advancements as men tried through their own works to once again attain to the paradise that was lost through Adam's sin. While we don't know for sure to what degree this civilization achieved, Solomon tells us in Eccl. 1:9, **"there is no new thing under the sun."**

We have already seen the Bible narrow its focus from creation of the whole earth to the Garden of Eden, then with man banned from the Garden, the focus is again narrowed to one man and his descendants with the birth of Seth. (Read Genesis 4:25-26) We will see throughout the Bible that God maintains a remnant who are loyal to Him. Seth starts a line of men whom the apostle Peter in II Peter 2:5 calls preachers of righteousness. JRL

