

LESSON 2

THE ACT THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (Gen. 2:4-3:24)

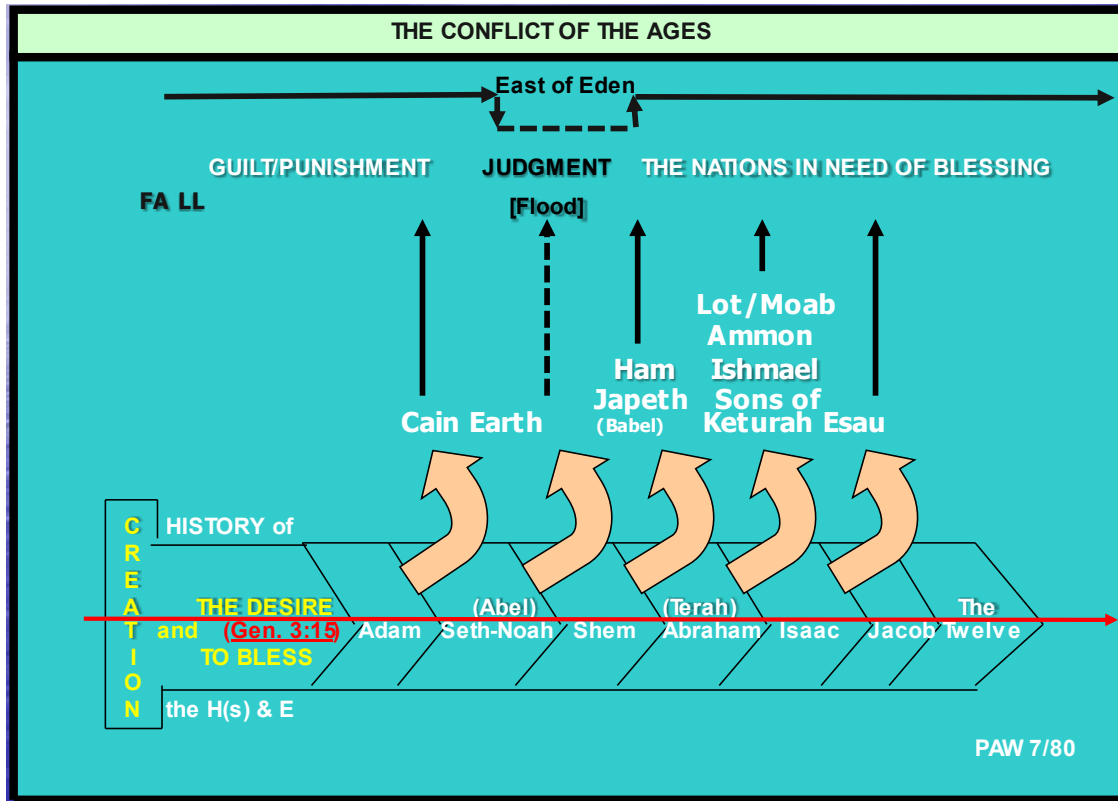
Seven Hebrew words open the Pentateuch and are the foundation of all that is to follow in the Bible. They identify the Creator, explain the origin of the world and tie the work of God in the past to the work of God in the future. His desire is to bless the heavens and earth and the man upon it.

So, Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." The pagan belief was that a god or gods had overcome the great sea monster Leviathan, who lived in the deep, to bring forth out of the watery abyss of chaos a beautiful earth, both formed and filled. Scripture was not afraid to use this imagery and apply it to YHVH as the conqueror of the Abyss (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 74:12-15; 89:8-10; Isa. 51:9-10; Job 7:12; 41; Ezek. 29:3). Moses says, it is God, Elohim, who overcame the dark watery deep to bring forth that which is "very good," not the gods of Egypt nor the gods of the Canaanites, nor any other so-called god.

Over the earth was placed a man. His name was Adam. Placed in a luscious garden, a paradise, he was to care for it and expand it, so that at some point, God's glory would fill the earth. But something happened. Rebellion and disobedience lodged in Adam's heart, and sin and death entered the world to mar the man, the woman and the glory of God's name (Rom. 5:12-14). A distinction would now have to be drawn between the God of the fathers, the patriarchs, and the gods of the nations.

Forfeiting the garden and the possibility of eternal life (3:22-24), along with broken relationships, the question became, "Who would redeem man and earth, defeating a tempter, sin and death." Answer, "the seed of the woman," Genesis 3:15. Through the seed of the woman's death, the heel bite, he would crush the serpent's head. So begins a struggle for the supremacy of heaven and earth with a villain who wanted to be like God (Isa. 14:12-15). He would do so by attempting to establish a dominion of unrighteousness in the place where God's glory was meant to reign. This becomes now, the conflict of the ages. A conflict that Moses both understood and foresaw as he wrote the Pentateuch. A conflict where he foresaw the victor (Gen. 49:*1; Num. 24:*14; Deut. 4:25-*30; 31:28-*29; 33:*21).

Moses then lays out the growth of this conflict in the book of Genesis. He follows the two lines, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, stating their interaction and conflict, casting the seed of the serpent east of Eden, while he follows the line of blessing that will eventually lead to the coming Messiah in the New Testament. Moses' understanding in Genesis will be the answer to the cry of Psalm 90:13-17. It can be diagrammed as follows:



THE GROWING CONFLICT EXPLAINED—Genesis 4-6 and the problem of evil according to Moses

- A. Eve, possibly thinking that she had birthed the coming seed of Genesis 3:15 (4:1), soon found out that sin would corrupt her first son (7)
- B. Warned by God (5-7), Cain disobeyed and slew his brother, because, says the Scripture, his deeds were evil—he is of the seed of the serpent (1 Jn. 3:10-12)
- C. Cast out from the presence of God (14), i.e., away from God's face, that is, from the presence of the coming seed of the woman who was in the garden, (see Jn. 14:9 with 1 Tim. 6:16), he would be separated from the coming seed, having no covering
- D. "The face or presence of God" will become *an important eschatological theme* for the redemption and coming of the Lord (see Exod. 33:18-23; Jn. 14:9; Matt. 23:39)
- E. Cain forfeited his redemption by refusing to heed the warning (see 3:21), whereas his mother and father accepted a covering of skins from the Lord, to cover their shame and guilt—i.e., something had to die that they might live [*an eschatological theme*]
- F. Cain would not repent, his heart was hard like the Pharaoh of the exodus
- G. Cain then settles east of Eden [*an eschatological theme*], and his offspring grow in their contempt and corruption, building a city (Gen. 4:16-24)
- H. While the death of the righteous Abel was meant by the darkness to extinguish the work of God in the bringing forth of the seed of the woman, God appoints a replacement, Seth (3:25-26); so, continues on the work of God to bring forth the seed of the woman through the genealogy of Genesis 5—Seth to Noah

- I. But the work of the seed of the serpent continues to grow (6:1-4), until the whole earth is corrupt, except for one man, Noah (6:5-8, 11-12)
 - J. Scripture is therefore once again at a critical juncture, in that the work of the seed of the serpent seems to be winning
 - K. So, to minimize the power of sin and the work of the seed of the serpent with his corrupting influence, God steps in with the flood (Gen. 6), bringing one man and his family through the flood, that He might continue on with His work of bringing forth the seed of the woman [*another eschatological theme*—world judgment]
 - L. What gives the enemy a base of operation in which to work his corruptive influence is stated in Gen. 8:21—the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth (see 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Jer. 31:31-34) [*an eschatological theme*]
- I. A NEW START**—Gen. 9:1, 12-17, 20-27
- A. With the judgment of heaven and earth complete, Noah and his seed are given the task to pick-up and accomplish the mandate given to Adam (9:1 with 1:28)
 - B. Because of the corrupting influence of the intentions of man's heart (so Cain, Gen. 4), God makes a covenant with Noah and all of mankind—He will never again flood the earth (9:12-17)
 - C. It will be through covenants that the promises of a coming seed will be safeguarded
 - D. Moses then parallels the history of the garden of Eden by taking the reader to another garden, the vineyard of Noah (20-27)
 - E. Here Ham commits a sin and his son Canaan is cursed (25) [**an eschatological theme**]
 - F. Shem is blessed, he will carry the genealogy leading to the seed of the woman and Canaan shall be his servant (26; 11:10-26)
 - G. God will enlarge Japheth with the prospect of dwelling in the tents of Shem and his God, and Canaan will be their servant, or another version—He, “God,” will dwell in the tents of Shem (27; see Walter Kaiser, “The Messiah in the OT,” p. 44; Targum of Onkelos)
 - H. But mankind resists the will of God (Gen. 9:1; 11:1ff.) and God will have to judge them in order to get them to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 11)
- II. THE PROMISES GIVEN TO ABRAM [ABRAHAM]**—Gen. 12:1-3
- A. Promises are given under the assumption of Abram's obedience, for obedience safeguards the promises of blessing (1)
 - 1. I will make you a great nation
 - 2. I will bless you and make your name great
 - 3. You shall be a blessing
 - a. I will bless those who bless you
 - b. I will curse those who curse you
 - c. And in you all the nations of the earth will be blessed
 - B. All of the above promises are *eschatological themes* (see Deut. 28-29)

- C. The land [*an eschatological theme*] in which Abram walked was promised to him and his seed forever by God Most High [*an eschatological theme*], possessor of heaven and earth, i.e., the one who created all and has the right to give it to whomever He wills (14-18 see 14:18-23; 17:76-8; Gen. 1:1ff.)

III. THE COVENANT MADE WITH ABRAHAM—Gen. 15; see Heb. 6:13-18

- A. At this point the bareness of Abram's wife Sarah blocked the work of God in bringing forth the seed of the woman and the promises of God (11:30)
- B. So, God intervenes with another promise, Abram will have a son who will come forth from his own flesh, lit. inward parts
- C. When Abraham believes, it brings forth the statement that by his faith he is justified, the means by which all redemption is personally secured (15:1-6)
- D. Abram then states, how will I know you will give me this land (8)
- E. To this God answers by establishing an unconditional covenant [*an eschatological theme*] through a binding oath (9-21)
- F. Thus, another covenant is made which safeguards the future (Heb. 6:13-18)

IV. THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL—Gen. 16-17

- A. When Sarai can't conceive, she offers up her maid Hagar as a progenitor of the promise
- B. When Hagar conceives, she despises Sarai (Gen. 21:9)
- C. Her son's name is called Ishmael [*another eschatological theme*], meaning a God who hears, "a wild donkey of a man who will be against every one and every one will be against him" (11-15; see 17:20-21; see Judges 8:24)
- D. As a son of an Egyptian woman, Ishmael is of the line of Ham (Gen. 10:6—Mizraim) and cannot be of the line leading to the seed of the woman, since that line was to come through Shem (Gen. 10:6; see 9:26)
- E. God will have to perform a miracle for Abraham to have his heir
- F. This miracle God will do under the title of "God Almighty (17:1-2; see Gen. 17-18)
- G. God will make Abram the father of a multitude of nations, and therefore changes his name to Abraham, the father of a multitude, i.e., exalted Father (17:4-5)
- H. And Sarai shall be called Sarah, "Princess," and she shall be a mother of nations, i.e. she will bear a child (17:15-16)
- I. The sign of this covenant with Abraham will be circumcision (15:7ff.; 17:9-14)
- J. Abraham will be the father of other sons, but not from Sarah, and these will be given gifts and sent away eastward [*an eschatological theme*] from his son Isaac (Gen. 25:1-6; see Gen. 4 where Cain is sent eastward—from the presence of God)

V. ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB (ISRAEL)—Gen. 21-35

- A. These are the fathers of the line leading to the seed of the woman (Exod. 2:24; 3:6); Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau—Edom [*two more eschatological themes*]
- B. In this passing of the seed line, Jacob's name will be changed to Israel [*another eschatological theme*], the name of promise
- C. From Jacob twelve sons will be born (Gen. 35)

- D. They will become the nation of promise made up of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel
- E. They are to walk with God, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did

VI. MOSES AND THE END OF DAYS—the latter days [the seed is further identified]

A. Gen. 49:1, 8-12—a ruler will come from Judah

1. Moses tells what will befall the twelve sons in the latter days
2. At the center of these verses stands a ruler (the seed of the woman)
3. So, Jacob's last words become the occasion for a final statement of the book's major theme which is God's plan to restore the lost blessing of the heavens and earth through the seed of Abraham (cf. Gen. 49:28 and the word bless used 3 times)
4. Verse one tells us that Jacob is speaking about those things in "the last days"
5. This phrase will again be stated in Num. 24:14-24 and Deut. 31:29; cf. Deut. 4:25-31, * 30)
6. In the list, the first three brothers are eliminated from carrying the line of the promised seed
7. Judah will become the preeminent son to carry a royal line (49:8-12)—Joseph will still have the right of the firstborn's blessings (1 Chron. 5:1-2)
8. Judah will become a victorious warrior to whom the brothers will bow down (8; cf. Gen. 37:10—the dream of Joseph)
9. He is pictured as a young lion sleeping after having devoured his prey, followed by the statement, "who shall rouse him" (9; cf. Num. 24:14-24)
10. Verse 10 then fills out the picture with the description of a young warrior king who holds the scepter and the ruler's staff (10)
11. Judah will hold such a status until "one comes to whom it truly belongs" (Shiloh—an untranslated form of the Hebrew expression meaning "one to whom it belongs")
12. To this one shall be the obedience of the nations, i.e., a kingship that extends beyond the boundaries of Canaan (10b; see Psa. 2:8; Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 5:5, 9)
13. Verses 11 and 12 picture the reign of this one
14. The picture is that of plenitude, the wine, the symbol of prosperity and blessing, will be so abundant that wine will be as commonplace as water (cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 19:11, 13, 15)
15. His eyes are darker than wine and his teeth whiter than milk—i.e., strength and power

B. Num. 22-24—Balaam and the king that shall rule the nations

1. Balak, out of fear hires Balaam to curse Israel (cf. Gen. 12:3)
2. The account parallels many of the early events in the book of Exodus, i.e., the future is going to be like the past
3. I.e., what God did for Israel in the past is seen as type of what he will do for them in the future through the promised king (Num. 23:22 and 24:7-8 with 1 Chron. 4:42-43, Agag/Gog; first plural, 23:22; then singular, 24:7-8)

4. Numbers 24:9 has reference to Gen. 49:9
 5. Num. 24:17 draws heavily on the crushing of the serpent's head in Gen. 3:15
 6. Balaam says, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but he is not near (is this David and or Messiah; see 24:23-24 that it is Messiah)
 7. The defeat of Moab is extended to cover the defeat of "Ashur and Eber"¹ probably Babylon at the hands of the Kittim (possibly the Romans)
 8. In the end, the Kittim will come to ruin (24:24)
 9. Kittim is also associated in the bible with nations such as Magog, Tubal, Media and Meshech, nations figured in the latter days in Ezek. 38:2-3 and Dan. 11:30, where Kittim is referenced in the last great battle (the Table of Nations, Gen. 10)
- C. Deut. 31:28-29—the scattering of Israel amongst the nations
1. Moses was commanded to write a song as a witness to the nation of Israel in the last days
 2. Moses knows that after his death Israel will act corruptly and therefore evil will befall then in the last days
 3. This judgment is apocalyptic in scope
 4. Deut. 4:25-31, *30 tells us the evil that will befall them in the last days, in that they will be scattered amongst the nations, but if or when they seek the Lord, He will have compassion upon them
 5. Lev. 26:27-33, 40-45 has already said these same things
 6. The curses for disobedience are found in Deut. 27-28 along with the blessings
 7. Deut. 30:1-8 then references their scattering, their repentance when God will circumcise their heart (Jer. 31:31), and adds that God will then inflict all these curses on their enemies
 8. The question that is left open is, where does this conquering king fit in light of the dispersion?

VII. IN SUMMARY

- A. Read the Song of Moses in Deut. 32:1-47
- B. Then read his blessings in Deut. 33:1-29
- C. Summarize these passages
- D. Deut. 34:10 closes with the one who will be like Moses, who knows God face to face, that He has not yet come (Deut. 18:14-15)
- E. He is the one who will gather a second time the people out from among the nations
- F. So, at the end of the Pentateuch we are awaiting the coming of a king who will return blessing and righteousness to the earth
- G. Ruth is the bridge between Genesis and 1 Samuel
 1. Ruth, a Moabitess
 2. Born in the time of the judges, i.e., the Book of Judges (Samuel is the last judge)
 3. Marries Boaz, the great grandfather of David (Ruth 4:18-22; cf. Gen. 38:1-*30)

¹ Eber is not the Eber in the table of Nations