

Session 1:

The Gospel in Genesis

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I. Introduction

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. (Ga 3:6–9).

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56).

- A. What did Abraham know about Jesus?
- B. How was the Gospel preached to Abraham?
- C. What did the various ancients (Adam, Eve, Noah, Moses, etc expect with relation to the Promised Messiah?
- D. How could it be said that the Gospel was preached 2000 years before Jesus?
- E. In order to better understand these questions, we need to go back to understand the story of redemption from the beginning. We need to examine the messianic prophecies as they were given, in their original context.
- F. In doing so, we will gain a much greater understanding ourselves of the story of redemption and the Gospel itself.

II. The Seed of the Woman

- A. Genesis 3:15 contains a declaration, straight from the mouth of God, foretelling the coming of the Messiah, the cross, and even the Battle of Armageddon.
- B. The story of redemption, the very Gospel itself, is rooted in this initial promise.

- C. From out of this scene of near perfection in the Garden, the serpent suddenly emerged, seeking to corrupt paradise:

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And it said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” (Gen 3:1).

- D. Who or what exactly was this serpent?

1. On one hand, the serpent is twice categorized alongside, “*every other beast*” (2:19; 3:1,14). On the other hand, it had ability to speak, and had an intellect much greater than man’s.
2. This “serpent” was no mere snake. Although the Hebrew *nachash* is used throughout the Scriptures for a common snake, in both Job and Isaiah, it is also used for Leviathan, who is there called, “*the fleeing serpent*” (Job 26:13) and “*the twisted serpent*” (Isa 27:1).
3. Further, the Book of Revelation identifies the serpent as Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
4. In 2 Corinthians 11 the Apostle Paul did the same. First, he began by expressing his concern: “*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*” (v. 3) Then, several verses later, Paul describes one of Satan’s deceptive capabilities: “*for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light*” (v. 14).
5. His point was the serpent in the garden was none other than Satan, who had disguised himself as a serpent.
6. In truth, Satan is likely a rebellious and thus fallen, Seraph or a heavenly “winged creature.”

“You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you” (Eze 28:14–15).

- E. Satan deceived both Eve and Adam into doing the one thing that God had forbidden them to do.

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6).

1. Through their disobedience, disorder re-entered the world. This was the greatest catastrophe in all of redemptive history. Mankind, created in the image of God to rule over the world, had fallen.
2. Spiritual death immediately entered the system.
3. This is seen in that they were said to have felt shame, but also in that as soon as they heard the sound of God walking in the garden, they hid from Him.
4. The unbroken communion they had previously enjoyed with their Creator was now fundamentally fractured. Mankind plunged headlong into the corrupt state that we now all find ourselves. We all now live far from paradise, far from unbroken fellowship with God, slumping toward the day when our bodies will die and decay in the grave.

F. Other Rebellions

1. While the fall in the garden helps to explain the current condition of this world, the problem is actually much bigger than the corruption of mankind alone.
2. Satan, a very powerful spiritual being, also rebelled against God and abandoned his proper place among the heavenly host.
3. Even further, the Bible actually teaches that there was another ancient spiritual rebellion when many of the heavenly beings agreed to *“abandon their proper abode”* and have offspring with *“the daughters of men”* (cf., Jude 6, cf., Gen. 6:2; 1 Enoch 6-7).
4. The problems with this world entail much more than what happened in the garden with Adam and Eve.
5. As things now sit, all of creation needs redemption. In order to provide a complete cure to the current condition of things, it must be comprehensive, addressing and fixing the fall of, *“all things ... things in the heavens and things on the earth”* (Eph 1:10).

G. Then the Lord cursed the serpent:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

1. God declared that there would be perpetual conflict between the seed of Eve and the seed of Satan, or those who follow his ways.
2. This particular conflict, as we will see, will unfold not only throughout the pages of the Bible, but will also continue to unfold on the world stage today.
3. It is the story of Satan’s seed at war with God’s chosen and holy people.
4. This verse (Gen 3:15) referred to by theologians as, “the first Gospel,” contains the first direct hint within Scripture of “messianic hope.”
5. It is here that the Lord introduced the concept, (albeit quite literally in seed form) of the coming Messiah.
6. This is the first time that the promise was made that a man was coming who would one day crush the head of the devil.
7. The evil one would strike at the heel of this mysterious “he,” but in the end, this “seed” would bring about the serpent’s complete defeat. Though this prophesied warrior would be wounded, in the end, he would emerge as the ultimate victor ***and crush Satan’s skull!***
8. In this prophecy, we learn of the Messiah, the cross, and even the battle of Armageddon.

III. The Prophecy of Enoch

- A. More than simply, “calling upon the name of the Lord” Enoch “walked with God” (Gen 4:22, 24).
- B. In fact, Enoch walked so closely with God that we’re told, “and he was not, for God took him.” The inference is clear. Through disobedience to God, mankind was sentenced to death. By walking intimately with God, Enoch found the door through which to escape death.

“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God” (Heb 11:5).

“Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jud 14–15).

- C. This is amazing to consider! Even before the flood, a mere seven generations from Adam, there was already a very well developed understanding concerning the promised one. Not only had Genesis 3:15 revealed that he would be a man—a warrior specifically—who would destroy the serpent, but he was also one who would come from heaven with myriads of angels to bring judgment to the wicked.

IV. The One Who Will Give Us Rest

- A. After Enoch, came Methuselah, Lamech, and finally Noah.

[Lamech] “lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed’” (Gen 5:28–29).

1. The name Noah means “rest” or “comfort.”
 2. In Lamech’s declaration, we see that he expected the Promised One to bring the righteous relief from the the curse of the fall. The reference to toilsome labor and the cursed ground clearly reflects God’s judgment in the garden, where the Lord “cursed ... the ground,” and mankind was doomed to beat out his daily existence only through, “painful toil.”
 3. Not only were the righteous looking forward to the crushing of the serpent, they were also expecting the curse to be broken. We have no reason to believe they were expecting the curse to be partially broken. It would be very easy to miss the importance of this and all that it entailed. When the promised one arrived, all of the damage done through the fall would be undone.
- B. Not only would all of creation itself be restored, but the righteous of mankind would no longer be under the curse of death. He is the one who

would give mankind relief, rest, and respite from the painful things that make us sigh and groan in this age. While the Coming One would indeed be a warrior, he would be far more than that. He would also be the quintessential redeemer, healer, and restorer of all things.

V. The Abrahamic Covenant: (Genesis 12-17)

- A. After the initial promise of the coming “seed” was planted in the garden, the next major step in God’s unfolding promise-plan would come through a series of promises made to Abram/Abraham. (The Abrahamic Covenant).
- B. The Abrahamic Covenant is the very hinge upon which so much world history has turned. If we wish to understand the primary spiritual dynamic behind the most important geopolitical conflict in the world today—the controversy between the State of Israel and practically every other nation in the world—then we must first understand God’s covenant with Abraham.

*Now the Lord said to Abram,
“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you.” (Gen 12:1)*

- C. The land that Abraham left was Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen 11:31, 15:7) which correlates to the region of modern day northern Iraq.
- D. Years after the fall of mankind in the garden, as the Lord looked down at the world that had become so filled with rebellion and violence, His plan to fix everything began by calling one man to leave behind his heathen culture, friends, and family.
- E. With the call to leave his homeland was a special promise that the Lord would greatly multiply Abraham’s offspring so as to become a vast people. The Lord would greatly bless them, and through them, all the peoples of the world would be blessed:

*And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,*

*And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Ge 12:2-3).*

- F. I often hear Christian’s who support Israel quote the first part of v. 3: *“I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.”* More often than not, however, they don’t quote the rest of the verse: *“And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*
- G. It’s critical that we recognize both parts of the promise.
- H. Yes, the Lord said that He would bless Abraham’s descendants, but His reason for doing so was ultimately because of His plan to bless every nation in the world.
- I. After leaving Ur, the Lord took Abram outside under the night sky and had him *“look toward the heavens”* (15:5).
- J. The Lord then said:

“one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir. Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants (seed) be” (Gen 15:5).
- K. Not only would Abram have a son, but eventually, his descendants would be as numerous as the stars.
- L. The ultimate fulfillment of the promise would only be achieved through a very specific “seed.” In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul the Apostle would later explain that this ultimate seed is none other than Jesus the Messiah (cf., Gal 3:16).
- M. It was made only to a specific branch of Abram’s descendants. The promise would not be fulfilled through any child that Abram would have, but specifically through the line of Isaac, who Sarah would bear, almost miraculously, at the old age of ninety (Gen 17:17).
- N. Although Abraham would eventually have eight sons (Gen 25), the promises were only made to the descendants of his one son Isaac. As the Lord declared, it would be, *“through Isaac [that] your descendants shall be named”* (Gen 21:12; cf., Gen 17:15-21).
- O. Later the promise was extended through Isaac’s son Jacob (Gen. 28:13-14), whose name would later be changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28).

- P. Thus the promise of blessing was ultimately only made solely to the corporate family of Israel.
- Q. But it actually gets even more specific than this. When Abram asked how he would be able to receive all of the things that the Lord was promising him, the answer was that one of Abraham's descendants, "the seed," would someday take possession of the promised land.
- R. The seed of Abraham and the seed of the woman are one and the same.
- S. The same one who will someday crush the head of Satan is the same one who will one day possess the promised land.
- T. Abraham believed in the one who would accomplish this.
1. According to the Scriptures, it was at that moment that Abram "*believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness*" (Ge 15:6).
 2. Not only did Abram believe that God would give him a son, but he actually trusted God and in the promised "seed" who would come forth his own loins.
 3. Jesus said that Abraham understood this, when he declared, "*father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad*" (John 8:56).
 4. It is this episode in Abram's life that the Apostle Paul would later use as the basis for his overwhelming emphasis on salvation only being attained through faith (cf., Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6).
 5. This is why it is said that Abraham had the Gospel preached to him.