

102 - God, Spirit World, Heaven and Hell

Genesis 1, John 1, Collosians 1, Revelation 20

A long, long time ago God created heaven, the throne from which to rule his creation to be. Heaven is a glorious place, beautiful and perfectly pure, filled with peace. God also created angels without number, in order to be His servants.

After that there was a certain angel named Satan, who God created to have an important function and much authority, became proud and desired to become God. He lied to and deceived a whole host of other angels - one third of all the angels - to join him in rebelling against God Almighty.

Then, there was war in heaven: But, Satan and his angels could not defeat the angels loyal to God. God judged those angels for their insurrection and prepared a place for Satan and his angels to endure eternal punishment - hell, which is like a lake of fire and burning sulfur. Eventually, one day God will cast them into that lake of fire. But God is waiting until His ultimate purposes are accomplished through them first, then they will receive their judgement.

So, Satan and his angels have become the enemies of God awaiting eternal punishment. Satan is also called the dragon, the serpent, the Father of Lies, and his angels are all the evil spirits, demons, Areak and Neak Ta who torture people, God's children, to this day. Today their domain is the expanse of the air, but they will one day be thrown into the Lake of Fire for good, to be punished forever and ever!

103 - The Creation of the World

Genesis 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty. There was only darkness over the water. God commanded, "Let there be light!" And, there was light. God saw that the light was good and separated the light from the darkness. That was the first day.

God commanded, "Let there be an expanse!" And it was so. God called the expanse "sky". That was the second day.

God commanded, "Let the waters below the sky be gathered into one place and allow dry ground to appear!" And it was so. God called the dry ground "earth" and the water "sea". God saw that the earth and sea were good. God commanded again, "Let vegetation, seed-bearing grains and fruit trees grow up from the ground according to their kinds." And that's what happened. God saw that it was all good. That was the third day.

God commanded, "Let there be lights in the sky in order to separate day from night, for telling time, days, years and seasons, and to shine on the earth." And that's what happened. God created two big lights, the larger to shine in the day, the smaller to shine in the night. God also made all the stars. God saw that it was all good. That was the fourth day.

God commanded, "Let there be an abundance of fish in the water and birds in the skies." And it was so. God created all of those animals according to their kinds. God saw that all those animals were good. God blessed all of them, "Reproduce and multiply in number!" That was the fifth day.

God commanded, "Let animals be created from the ground; may there be livestock, wild animals and reptiles according to their kinds." And it was so. God saw that all of the animals were good. God commanded again, "Let's make people as our representatives, having our nature, in order to have authority over the fish of the sea, over the birds and over the livestock and wild animals, both large and small on the entire earth." God created people as his representatives, having his nature, both men and women. God said, "Reproduce and multiply, fill the earth and take charge of it. Take authority over the fish of the sea, over birds and over the land animals." God continued, "Look, We have given various grains and all kinds of fruit to you for food, and we have given green grass to

all the animals for food." And it was so. God saw all the things that he had created and they were very good. That was the sixth day.

The sky and the earth were finished. On the seventh day God finished all the work of creation and he rested, blessing the seventh day and setting it apart as a special day.

104 - The Very First People

Genesis 2

God took some dirt and formed it into a man, and then blew into his nostrils the breath of life.

God made a garden in Eden and took the man that he had formed and placed him in that garden. God caused all kinds of fruit trees to grow from the ground, trees having fresh and beautiful fruit that was good to eat. In the middle of the garden was the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

A river flowed in to water the garden and from inside the garden it divided into four rivers.

God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to care for it. God commanded the man, "You may eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden, but you must not eat the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for the day you eat that fruit you will certainly die."

God said, "For the man to be alone like this is not good. We will make another person to help and to be a companion." God brought every kind of animal that he had created to the man to name them. So, all animals were named according to the name the man gave them. But, he did not find a single animal that could help him and to be a companion.

So, God caused the man to go unconscious and he took out one of his ribs, then closed up his flesh. God took the rib that he had pulled out of the man and formed it into a woman and brought her to meet the man. The man said, "This is truly bone from my bone, flesh from my flesh, I will name her 'woman'."

Therefore whenever a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife the two become one body.

At that time the man and his wife were both naked but were not ashamed.

105 - The Very First People Disobey God

Genesis 3

The serpent was the most deceitful of all the wild animals that God had created. Satan spoke to the woman through the serpent, "Did God really command both of you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" The woman replied to the serpent, "No! We may eat all of the fruit in the garden, except from the tree in the middle of the garden, for God forbade us saying, "Don't eat its fruit! Do not touch it! If you don't obey, you will surely die." Then the serpent answered, "No! You will not die. But, God knows that whenever you eat of that fruit, you will be enlightened and surely become like God who knows good and evil."

The woman looked at the tree and saw its fruit was delicious, fresh and beautiful and would bring her wisdom, too. She picked one and ate it, and shared one with her husband who was with her and her husband ate one as well. Immediately they were enlightened and knew that they were naked. They picked fig leaves and covered their bodies.

Later they heard God in the garden; the man and the woman together ran and hid behind the trees in the garden so that God couldn't see them. God called out to the man, "Where are you?" He replied to God, "I heard you in the garden and I was really afraid because I was naked." God asked further, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit that we forbade you to eat?" The man answered, "The woman that you made to be my companion gave the fruit to me and I ate it." God asked the woman, "Why did you do that?" The woman replied, "The serpent deceived me and I went ahead and ate the fruit."

God condemned the serpent, "You are cursed! You will crawl on your belly and eat dust your entire life. We will cause you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring, to become enemies. Her offspring will crush your head and you will strike his heel."

God condemned the woman, "When you are pregnant we will cause you to suffer greatly, you will give birth to children in pain. You will love your husband, but he will lord it over you."

God condemned the man, "Because you obeyed the words of your wife and ate the fruit that we forbade you, the ground will be cursed because of you. Therefore, you will work the ground for a living with misery every day your whole life. The ground will produce thorns and thistles, you will make your living by sweating until the day that you become dirt again."

The man, known as "Adam", gave his wife the name "Eve" for she was the mother of all people. God took animal skins and made clothes for Adam and Eve and he said, "Now people know good and evil as we do, therefore, we will stop them from picking the fruit of the Tree of Life any longer, in case they should eat of it and have eternal life.

God expelled them from the Garden of Eden, then placed an angel holding a flaming sword to protect the entrance to the garden so that they could no longer approach the Tree of Life.

106 - From Ancient Times to the Savior Descending From Heaven

Genesis – Matthew

Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden Eden and were cut off from the Tree that Gives Life. So, from that point on they began to suffer, get sick and be in pain right until they died; evil began to spread over the world. All of this happened as the result of disobedience to God – that's what is known as "sin".

And then Adam had relations with Eve, his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to their firstborn; following that she gave birth to many other sons and daughters. So, all of mankind, every nationality, are direct descendants of those two people and every person, old or young, has sin, suffers hardship and dies like them as well. And so we have all been cut off from relationship with God who is the source of life and are doomed to death by eternal punishment in the lake of fire because of our sin.

After that, mankind attempted to resolve this problem by themselves – wanting to erase and wash away their sin and find immortality – but were not able to do so. They began sacrificing animals, giving burnt offerings, doing religious works and giving alms, worshipping the gods of the sun and moon, as well as offering food sacrifices to their dead ancestors and evil spirits. But, sin and death remained with them all the same. They took gold, silver and wood, sculpted them into gods and worshipped and prayed to those images. But, all of man's attempts were completely useless because outside of God, there is no one who can remove sin.

When God looked and saw the people suffering like this he was merciful and so loved mankind that he promised through his prophets that he would send the Son of God, who is holy and who has absolutely no sin, to come to save and rescue mankind from sin and death. God promised that he would descend from heaven to deliver man from the power of the enemy, Satan, and forgive the guilt of their sins, bestowing on them everlasting life.

201 - The Son of God Comes to Earth

Matthew 1 – Luke 2

A period of many thousands of years after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, there was a woman named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. Before the two of them had sex together, Mary was already pregnant by the Spirit.

Joseph, her husband, was a good man and decided to break off the engagement quietly so she wouldn't lose face. As he was thinking of doing this, suddenly he dreamt that an angel from God came and told him, "Joseph! Don't be afraid to receive Mary as your wife! The boy that is in her womb was conceived by the Spirit. She will give birth to a boy and you must name him 'Jesus' – that boy will save God's people from their sins!"

After that Joseph woke up and followed what God had commanded him to do, he received Mary as his wife but they did not have sex until after she had given birth to the Son of God whose name is "Jesus".

At that time the King commanded all of the people to register their names in each of their homelands; Joseph and Mary, his wife, traveled to their homeland in order to register their names as well. When they arrived at their homeland Mary was full-term; she gave birth to her firstborn and wrapped him in a cloth and then put him to sleep in a manger, because there was no room for them in the guesthouse.

This happened in fulfillment of the words that God promised through his servants saying, "Look! The virgin will be pregnant and will give birth to a son, who is God With Us."

202 - Jesus Has Authority Over Nature and Evil Spirits

Mark 4:35 – 5:20

One evening, Jesus said to his students, "Come, let's cross to the other side of the sea." The students left the crowds, setting sail in a boat with Jesus in it. Suddenly, there was a severe windstorm and the waves began splashing against the boat causing water to go in, nearly filling it. But Jesus was sleeping on a pillow at the boat's stern. The students woke Jesus and said, "Teacher, we are dying! Don't you care?" Jesus stood up and commanded the windstorm and sea, "Be quiet!" Then the windstorm went quiet and the surface of the sea became smooth. After that, Jesus said to the students, "Why were you terrified? Don't you have faith?" The students were greatly afraid and asked each other, "Who is this guy that even the wind and sea obey his commands?"

Jesus and the students reached the other side. When Jesus was getting up out of the boat, immediately there was a demon-possessed man from the graveyard walking straight towards him. This man stayed only in the graveyard and no one was able to bind him, even by binding him with chains. They put chains and leg irons on him many times, but he always broke and smashed those chains and leg irons – no one was able to subdue him. Night and day he screamed constantly and took stones to cut up his own flesh as well. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran over and bowed down to worship Him. Jesus commanded him, "Hey, evil spirit, get out of this man!" The demon screamed, "Oh, Jesus, the Son of God the most high, what do you want to do to me? I beg you, please don't torture me!"

Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" The demon answered, "My name is 'Army', for we are many." Nearby there was a herd of pigs grazing at the base of a mountain. The demons pleaded with Jesus further, "Please don't banish us from this country, but please send us into all of those pigs!" Jesus agreed. The demons left that man and entered into the herd of 2,000 pigs – they stampeded down a steep bank straight into the sea where they drowned – all dead. The pig herders ran and told people everywhere about this story and many people came to see what had happened. They saw Jesus and they saw the man that used to have an army of demons possessing him sitting quietly, clothed and in his right mind – they were terrified. So all of the people asked Jesus to leave their region. When Jesus was getting down into the boat, he told the man who was delivered from the army of demons, "Go back home and return to live with your family and tell of all the things that the Lord has done for you by his mercy. The man left and began to proclaim about all that Jesus had done for him and all people were astonished and amazed.

203 - Jesus Has Authority to Forgive Sins

Luke 5:17-26

After that, Jesus arrived at the other shore with his students. Jesus started to teach the people and there were religious people sitting and listening to him, too. Jesus, filled with the power of God, cured the sick. And then, all of the sudden, a quadriplegic man who was being carried on a stretcher arrived, they intended to bring that cripple near to Jesus. But because there were too many people they were unable to get close to him. So, they carried the cripple up to the roof, pulled off the roof tiles and lowered him down in the middle of all the people, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith he said to the cripple, "Friend, I forgive you of your sins!" The religious people thought to themselves, Jesus surely thinks he's equal to God for saying that! Only God alone is able to forgive people their sins! Jesus knew their thoughts and then he said, "Why are you thinking like this? If I say to the cripple, 'I forgive you of your sins' or say 'Get up and walk', which sentence is easier to say? But I want you all to know that I have authority to forgive people of this world their sins." He turned to the cripple and said, "Get up, take your stretcher and walk back home!" Immediately the cripple got up in front of all the people, then took the stretcher on which he was carried and walked back home, praising God.

All who were there were awestruck and praised and magnified God. They were terrified and said to each other, "Today, we have seen a truly extraordinary miracle!"

204 - Jesus Has Authority Over Sickness and Death

Mark 5:21-43

While Jesus was still teaching and healing the sick, a man who was responsible for the synagogue, named Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he kneeled before him and pleaded, "My daughter is seriously ill and near death! Please come and lay your hands on her so she can be well and live." Jesus went with him. Many people followed him, pushing each other and crowding around Jesus.

Just then there was a woman who had had a bleeding disorder for 12 years. Many doctors tried to cure her, but all she got was more pain. She spent all of the treasure that she had, but her condition continued to worsen. She had heard of Jesus so she thought, "If I could just touch his shirt, I would be healed for sure!" So she pushed her way into the crowd and touched his shirt from behind.

Immediately she stopped bleeding and she knew that her body had been made completely well. Right then Jesus knew that a power had gone out of him and asked the people, "Who touched my shirt?" The students answered, "You can surely see that all the people are pushing and bumping into you. Why ask who touched my shirt?" Jesus looked around and saw that woman terrified and shaking in fear, because she knew what had happened to her. She kneeled down and told the whole story to him. Jesus answered her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well, may you leave healthy and healed completely from your disease."

When Jesus was still speaking, someone from Jairus' house came and informed him, "Your daughter is dead, don't bother the teacher and longer." Jesus ignored their words and said to Jairus, "Don't fear, only believe - that's enough." Having arrived at Jairus' house, Jesus did not permit anyone to follow him, except three students, Peter, John and James. Jesus went in to the house and saw people crying loudly and making a lot of noise. Jesus said, "Why are you crying and carrying on like this? This child is not dead, she's only sleeping!" They mocked Jesus so he chased all of them out and led the child's parents and his three students into the room where the child was lying.

Jesus grabbed the child's hand, who was 12 years old, and said, "Little girl, get up!" The girl got up and started walking around immediately. They were greatly astonished! But Jesus forbade them from telling anyone about this story.

205 - Jesus Gives His Life On the Cross

Luke 23:24, 32-56

Introduction:

When Jesus was grown, he made it clear time and again that he was truly God. Jesus performed many signs and miracles that showed he was really God and also taught people about the way to be free from sin and about his kingdom.

Even though he did good to people at all times, the religious leaders were disgusted with him because they were jealous over Jesus' overwhelming popularity among the people. So, they conspired to kill him by claiming that he was a national traitor that was leading a rebellion. Pilate, the governor over the city of Jerusalem, gave in to the demands of those religious leaders and ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus and nail his hands and feet to the cross in order to execute him.

The soldiers of the city governor led Jesus into the fortress courtyard and gathered around him. They stripped him of his robe and took a dark red robe and put it on him. They took thorns and braided them into a crown and put it on his head and took a rod and placed it in his right hand for him to hold, then, they kneeled down before him mocking, "Hail, the King!" They spat on him and took the rod and beat his head. After that, they took the robe off him and put his own robe back on then led him out to be crucified.

Jesus carried his own cross out of the city toward a place named, "Skull Hill". When they arrived at that place they crucified Jesus. Then the soldiers took his clothes, gambled and divided them amongst themselves. Then they sat down and guarded him there. They also crucified to thieves with Jesus, one on his right and one on his left.

Many people and the religious leaders walked by mocking and looking down on him, shaking their heads at him saying, "Go ahead and save yourself! If you are really the Son of God, please come down from the cross! Because he had said, 'I am the Son of God.' " Even the thieves that were crucified with Jesus cursed and mocked him like this.

The whole earth went pitch dark, starting from midday to three o'clock in the afternoon. Jesus shouted loudly and breathed his last. Right then, the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, huge boulders split apart, the tombs opened up wide and the corpses of many good people came back to life, leaving their tombs!

When the captain of the soldiers and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and saw all that had happened, they were terrified and said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

206 - God Raises Jesus Back to Life

Matthew 27:57-28:15; Mark 15:1-2, 16:10-14; Luke 24:37-42

After Jesus died that evening, a wealthy man named Joseph who was a good man with a good reputation dared to meet the city governor and ask to take Jesus' body. Pilate ordered the body to be given over to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a new cloth, then put it in his tomb – it was a cave where they had chiseled out a tomb. After that he rolled a large stone to close the entrance of the tomb and left. Two women who were students of Jesus were there as well – they sat in front of the tomb.

The following day the religious leaders went together to tell Pilate, "We can still remember the words of that schemer when he was still alive – he said, 'Three days after I've died I will be raised back to life.' Because of this please order that the tomb be guarded up until the third day in case his students come and steal the body and tell people that he's been raised back to life." Pilate said to them, "You all have guards of your own, go ahead and arrange for the tomb to be guarded!" Together they went to secure the tomb, stamped a seal on it and placed soldiers to stay and guard it, too.

On Sunday at dawn three women who were Jesus' students bought spices and brought them to perfume Jesus' body. When the sun was rising, the women were walking toward the tomb asking themselves, "Who can help roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb for us?" Then, all of the sudden, the earth quaked violently, for there was an angel of God who came down from heaven and rolled the stone away from the tomb's entrance and sat right on top of the rock! The soldiers shook with great fear and fell down as dead people! The angel spoke to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know that you have come to look for Jesus whom they have crucified – he is not here! God has raised him back to life just as he already told you. First, come and see the place where they laid his body over here then go quickly and tell his students that he has been raised back to life!"

The women ran from the tomb both afraid and overjoyed to bring the news to the students. Then, all of the sudden, Jesus himself met the women and said, "Greetings!" The women hugged his feet and bowed to worship him. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of anything, please go and tell my brothers and sisters that they will see me, too".

The women brought the news and told all those who were previously with Jesus. They were all mourning and sobbing. When they heard that Jesus had been raised back to life and heard that the women had seen him, they didn't believe it. After that, Jesus showed himself to his

students for them to see for themselves while they were eating. They were both happy and terrified. Jesus scolded them because they did not believe those who had seen Jesus risen back to life. Jesus asked them, "Why is it that all of you are terrified? Why do you all still doubt? Look at my hands and feet – it's really me! Go ahead and touch me – ghosts don't have flesh and bones like I do." Then he showed them his hands and feet and after that went ahead and had some grilled fish with them!

207 - Jesus Goes Up to Heaven

Acts 1; Matthew 24,28; Mark 16; Luke 21

Over a period of 40 days after Jesus had suffered, he showed himself to all of his students for them to see that he had truly been raised to life. On the final day, he taught them about the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus charged his students to become ambassadors of the kingdom of God by commanding them saying, "Go out and lead people of all nations to become my students and submerge them in water in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit and teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you. Whoever believes and is submerged in water, God will forgive their guilt, as for those who do not believe, they will be condemned."

The students who were his ambassadors were confused and asked Jesus, "Aren't you at this time going to set up your kingdom here on earth?" He answered them, "No, only the Father knows the preappointed time, but the power of the Spirit will come and fill all of you and you will be witnesses of me everywhere on the earth. Whoever believes will perform these signs, they will cast out demons in my name, they will speak in new languages, they will not be harmed by snake bites or by drinking any poisonous thing, and they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. Know that I am with all of you, every day, right up until the end of the age."

When Jesus finished talking, his ambassadors were looking at him and all of the sudden God lifted him up to the sky and clouds came and hid him from their eyes. While they were still looking up into the sky, all of the sudden two men wearing white came near them and said, "Why are you standing there staring up into the sky like this? Jesus will return in the very same way that he went up to heaven."

When they had heard the angel's words, the students recalled what Jesus had already taught them. Jesus had predicted that, "One nation will make war with another nation, in various regions there will be epidemics, famine and earthquakes. People all over the world will panic, they will worry and fret when they hear the roar of the waves of the sea pounding and will be in terror because of the awesome things that are happening. Evil deeds will increase greatly. Even though they encounter great persecution, my servants will proclaim the good news all over the whole universe. And then, I will return. I will return just like a brilliant flash of lightening, they will see me coming on the clouds of the sky, filled with great power and awesome glory."

"At that moment there will be the sound of a trumpet blast; I will dispatch angels to gather those who have been chosen by God, from one horizon to the other. Then, I will sit upon a glorious throne and people of all nations will be assembled in front of me – I will pass judgement on all people by separating them from each other. The believers that the Father has saved will be put on my right and the people who refused to believe will be put on my left. To the believers I will say, 'Go ahead and enter the kingdom of heaven that I prepared for all of you ever since the creation of the world.' To the unbelievers I will say, 'Depart far away from us and fall into the lake of fire that burns forever, which is the fire prepared for the judgement of Satan and his angels!'"

The students that had become ambassadors of Jesus, returned to Jerusalem city, both bewildered and greatly astonished, in order to wait for the power of the Spirit for spreading the good news everywhere.