

Osaka International Church

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Series: Beginnings #17

Title: The Plans of the Lord

Scripture: Genesis 1-11



I. Introduction

Good morning! Last November we started at the beginning of Genesis and last week we finished chapter 11. Before we move on, let's step back and look at the big picture. In **John 17:24**, Jesus prayed, **“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”** Notice Jesus' comment about how the Father loved Him before the creation of the world. This is one of a number of places where the Bible speaks of things that God did before He created the world. Verses like these clearly teach that God transcends time and space.

II. Teaching

Before God created time and space and all of the things of this world, God already existed as a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three exist eternally in perfect love and unity, a relationship which we can describe as a circle of love. God is one God in three persons, of one essence and perfect in unity, and His essence is love. And, because He is love, God chose to bring others into His circle of love. So He made a plan to create men and women. **Ephesians 1:4-5** tells us concerning this plan, **“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”**



God had a clear purpose, and He made a plan to accomplish His purpose. Then He began to create. **Genesis 1:1** says, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** This short, simple verse tells us that the world had a beginning, and that there is one, all-powerful God who created the world and who reveals Himself to us.



These simple facts stand against whole libraries of human philosophies and countless, man-made gods and religious systems. If we accept Genesis 1:1, then we can discard atheism, agnosticism, polytheism, materialism, humanism, pantheism, monism, and deism. From the very first verse, the Bible teaches monotheism, the belief in one Creator God.

World View Choices 世界觀的選擇	
X	Atheism 無神論
X	Agnosticism 不可知論
X	Polytheism 多神論
X	Materialism 物質主義
X	Humanism 人間主義
X	Pantheism 汎神論
X	Monism 一元論
X	Deism 理神論
O	Monotheism 唯一神教

Genesis 1 continues and describes how God created the world in an orderly fashion during the six days of creation. And, on the sixth day, in **Genesis 1:27**, God creates mankind. **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”** Men and women are created in the image of God and are given the Spirit of God, making humankind uniquely different than the animals. God is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, and man has a soul, a body, and a spirit. And observation of nature shows that only man is continually creating new things and seeking after spiritual meaning. We do these things because we are made in the image of God.

God placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave him a wife to be his companion. In the Garden, the man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed. They walked side by side in innocence and in close relationship with the Lord.



But there was an enemy in the Garden also that ancient snake, the devil. And, the devil came and tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and she ate. And she gave some to Adam, and he also ate. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and in their sin we find the origins of the pain and suffering of this world. But God also promised that a Savior would come and defeat the works of the devil. And God clothed them with animal skins, establishing the need for a blood sacrifice to cover sins.



God would not permit them to eat from the Tree of Life and live forever in their fallen and sinful state, and so Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden. Outside, they faced a harsh world where food was obtained only through hard work. Children were born to them, but their sorrow was multiplied when their son Cain murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy. But also here, the principle of faith is established. **Hebrews 11:4a and 6a, "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. ... And without faith it is impossible to please God."**



Noah walked with God by faith and preached repentance even as he was building the ark. A flood was coming, but God had provided a way of salvation. Anyone who believed the warning could get in the ark and be saved. But in the end only Noah's family boarded the ark and were saved. When they came out of the ark after the great flood, Noah built an altar and gave thanks to God. And, in **Genesis 9:1**, we read, **"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.'"**



They were commanded to multiply and fill the earth. But their descendants refused and they united against God by building a tower of pride and rebellion. But the Lord confused their languages and they finally spread out across the lands of the earth as the Lord had commanded Noah.



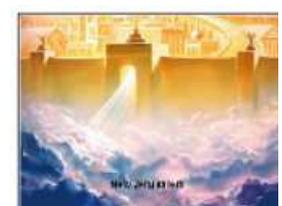
After that time, various nations and languages were established and the many peoples and cultures that we know today were gradually formed. Today there are many peoples in many lands. But each and every one of us still face the same basic question that Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his family, and the builders of the Tower of Babel faced.



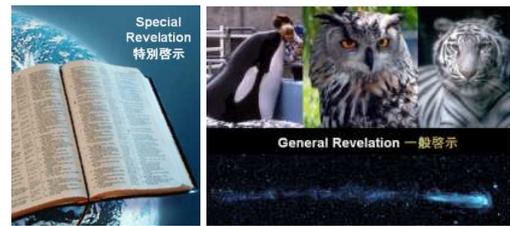
Will we believe God? Will we listen to His voice and walk with Him? Or will we follow those who reject God's ways? Every day we are faced with a choice. Will we live by earthly values of profit and pleasure? Or will we leave the wide road and turn on to the narrow path of God's way? This is the choice the ancients faced, and it is the same choice that we face today.



Today, we have the whole Bible and we know a lot about the plan of God. We have the words of **Isaiah 53:6**, reminding us of our need for a Savior. Because, **"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."** And we have the record of the saving work of Jesus, the great proof of God's love. **Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** We even have all of the promises of heaven in the completed Scriptures, our Bibles.



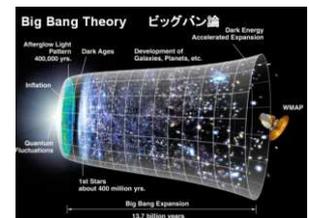
But the basic choice remains the same. Will we seek God? Or will we walk away from Him? **Psalm 119:2** encourages us to choose wisely, **“Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.”** How can we seek God and know His ways? The Bible, God’s special revelation given to us, is our primary and best source. However, God has also given us a revelation of His glory, power, and love in nature. This general revelation is sometimes more difficult to read and understand than the Bible, but it is also very important, because it speaks to all people in all times and places.



The motive that drove the work of many early scientists was the desire to understand the general revelation that God has given us in nature. Unfortunately, during the last two hundred years or so, some scientists have greatly misunderstood the things they saw in nature and have promoted ideas that conflict with what the Bible teaches. On the other hand, some theologians have interpreted the Bible in ways that led to unnecessary conflicts with what is observed in nature.

But it is fascinating to me that in recent years, scientific theories and Bible interpretation seem to be gradually moving toward a common understanding. On one side, many Christians now think that the days of creation in Genesis represent long ages of time, that Noah’s flood may have been a regional flood, and that some difficult passages that were once taken literally should be seen as symbolic or metaphorical.

On the other side, virtually all scientists have rejected the static universe theory and embraced the Big Bang - a theory which agrees with the Bible’s assertion that time and space had a definite beginning. And, while the theory of evolution is still taught, today many scientists agree with the Bible teaching that all people are descended from common human ancestors. As a result of worldwide DNA analysis, scientists now speak of the Most Recent Common Ancestors (MRCA) of mankind - a, “Mitochondrial Eve,” who was the common mother of all and a, “Y-chromosome Adam,” who was our common father.

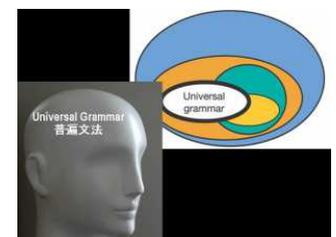


Interestingly, the results of this kind of DNA analysis indicate that, “Mitochondrial Eve,” as they call her, lived further back in time than, “Y-chromosome Adam.” This is exactly what we would expect from the Bible record, which records that Noah is the Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) on the male side, but Eve is the MRCA on the female side. On the male side, all peoples are descended from Noah, but on the female side, the wives of Noah’s sons would have come from different lines probably going back to Eve. So the DNA evidence reflects what we read in the Bible. Of course, there are still issues, including differences in dating of when the first humans lived, but good answers may be found as research continues.

MRCA Most Recent Common Ancestors
(From Worldwide DNA Analysis)
 全世界のDNA分析からの最新祖先DNA配列

- Y-chromosomal Adam Y染色体アダム
 - 60,000 years ago 6万年前
 - Biblical Noah? 聖書のノア?
 Through Noah and his sons
 ノアとノアの息子を通して
- Mitochondrial Eve ミトコンドリア・イヴ
 - 140,000 years ago 14万年前
 - Biblical Eve? 聖書のエバ?
 Through Noah's wife and his sons wives
 ノアの妻、ノアの息子の妻たちを通して

One interesting, new development is the theory of Universal Grammar in the field of linguistics. This theory says that we are all born with a Universal Grammar built into our brains that provides a sort of blueprint of the basic, common concepts of language. This theory helps to explain why children are able to learn language very rapidly in their first few years, and this theory would also seem to support the idea that all languages have roots in an original and common language, just as the Tower of Babel story records.



One more example comes from studies in archeology and anthropology. Researchers have discovered that around the world, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 5,000 year old stone megaliths known as dolmen have basically the same design. These two examples, from Ireland and Korea have almost identical designs. This is powerful evidence that there was one original human culture that spread out across the globe, just as Genesis has always said.



In astronomy, genetics, linguistics, archeology, and anthropology, modern science is confirming many basic Bible teachings, and probably in other fields as well. Many people mistakenly think that science and faith are incompatible, but that is far from true. There are still issues, but on the whole, modern science is largely in agreement with what the Bible teaches concerning the major events of the history of the world and of humankind.

III. Closing

Today, I think that we have more evidence for Christian faith than any generation that came before us. And I am convinced that all of this is according to God's plan and purpose. From the beginning, God made a plan to bring many people into loving relationship with Himself. And the plans of God are unchanging and His purposes cannot fail. **Psalm 33:11** says it this way, **“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”**



After Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord God came looking for them. **Genesis 3:9** tells us, **“But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”**” The same question could be asked of each of us, *“Where are you?”* Are you hiding from God because you are ashamed of your sin? Are you busy building a tower of pride or rebellion? Or are you walking with God in obedience to His plan and purpose? Every day, we choose how we live. Choose wisely. Choose God.



IV. Closing Prayer