



2021 Q2 The Promise: Lesson 1 What Happened?

by Russell Atkins

In order to understand what was needed as a remedy for mankind, of which the Covenant is a symbol, we need to understand what happened in the “beginning.” NOT the beginning of Scripture or the beginning of our earth. NOT the beginning of the time of trouble or the latter rain. We need to understand the very beginning – the creation of the first intelligent being, and the beginning of sin itself. We need to imagine how Lucifer came to believe God’s design law was imposed on His creation, and how those laws, instead of guaranteeing the happiness and freedom of intelligent beings, were presented as restrictive, selfish, arbitrary, and damaging.

This week’s lesson is about the “fall” of mankind, but we need to understand the context within which mankind was created in the first place – a universe at war. God could have just made declarations that He was right, and as the Sovereign of the universe, everyone better get on board. But no – He provided evidence. Not proof, but evidence, and the distinction between the two is critical. Irrefutable proof can be coercive, and coercion has no place in God’s government. Evidence is given to intelligent beings and then they are **free** to question, debate, and accept or reject the evidence given.

Once we conceptualize God’s gift of the Creation of Earth and mankind as evidence refuting the allegations of Lucifer, we can better understand the cost of mankind’s “fall” and the Promise / Covenant given as a Remedy.

From the introduction of the lesson:

In 1588, a young English woman (seven months pregnant) looked out over the sea, and what she saw—the Spanish Armada, with 130 heavily armed ships planning to invade the island—so frightened her that she went into premature labor, the midwife being fear.

Fear, in fact, was an apt image for her child, Thomas Hobbes, who became one of Europe’s greatest political theorists. Living at a time when England had been wracked by civil war and endless religious violence, Hobbes wrote that humankind, without a strong, all-encompassing government, existed in a state of perpetual fear—fear of instability, fear of conquest, and, most of all, fear of death. People lived in what he called “the war of all against all” and that unless something radical was done, human life would be, he warned, nothing but “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

What was the solution? Hobbes said that there was only one: the people must place themselves under a single power that would reduce all their wills to a single will and that would exercise complete authority over them. This power, this sovereign—be it a single man or an assembly of men—though wielding absolute hegemony over the nation, would end the terrible



conditions that made their lives so fearful and unstable. In other words, in exchange for all their rights, the people got peace and security instead. This transfer of power, from the people to the sovereign, is what Hobbes called the “covenant.”

The covenant idea, however, did not originate with Hobbes. On the contrary, thousands of years earlier, God made a covenant with Israel, a covenant whose roots, in fact, went back even further in time. Unlike Hobbes’s covenant, which was initiated and promulgated by the people, this covenant was initiated and promulgated by the true Sovereign, the Creator of heaven and earth. Also, though Hobbes’s covenant was motivated solely by fear, God’s covenant is motivated by love, His love for the fallen race, a love that led Him to the Cross.

Thus, because of what Christ has done for us, we love God back, and just as in the Hobbesian covenant, in which the subjects had to surrender to the sovereign, we surrender, too—our sinful ways, our fears, our twisted notions of right and wrong. We do this not to gain something in return, but because we already have been given the best that the Sovereign can give—Jesus Christ and the Redemption found only in Him.

How does it all work? It is as simple as an exchange: Christ takes our sins and gives us His righteousness so that, through Him, we are accounted as righteous as God Himself. In this way, sin is no longer attributed to us; it no longer must keep us separated from Him. Murderers, adulterers, bigots, liars, thieves, and even the incestuous can all be viewed as righteous as God Himself. And this wonderful gift, this accounting of righteousness, comes to them by faith, and faith alone. Hence the phrase, “righteousness by faith.”

But it does not end there, either. Murderers, adulterers, bigots, liars, thieves, and even the incestuous can, through Jesus, enter into a relationship with God, because Jesus’ blood brings not only forgiveness but cleansing, healing, and restoration. We are, through Christ, born again, and through this experience God writes His holy law upon the fleshy tables of our hearts. Thus, murderers, adulterers, bigots, liars, thieves, and the incestuous no longer do the things they used to do. From and by this inward law, all of life is shaped for the believer. These people desire to work out what God puts within them, and that desire is matched with the promise of divine power. Here is the essence of what it means to live in covenant relationship with God.

This quarter, then, we look more closely at what God’s covenant is, what it offers, even what it demands. Though drawn from many sources, the lessons rely heavily on work of the late Gerhard Hasel, whose insights into the Word (where the covenant promises are revealed) will give encouragement, hope, and understanding in order that we can learn something that, perhaps, Hobbes never did: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18).



Does this introduction make sense to you? Are you able to discern what is being communicated? What Law lens are you viewing the above with? Do you agree with the above passage? Be prepared to defend your answers...

*****I highly recommend reading Patriarchs and Prophets chapters 1-4. There are deep insights to the origin of sin, the Creation, the Trees, Adam and Eve’s fall, and the Promised One – The Remedy for sin.*****

SABBATH

“Then God said, ‘Let us make ~~h~~mankind in our image, according to our likeness...’ So God created ~~h~~mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26, 27, NRSV)

It’s entertaining that we cannot use the term “mankind” anymore because certain groups get angry. I will use the term “mankind”. Direct your spittle flecked rage at your gender studies professors.

What does it mean to be made in “God’s image”?

Is it 2 eyes/ears/arms/legs? Is it 1 nose/mouth/brain? Is it the capability to reason/use judgment? Is it emotions? Is it our procreative abilities, and our dominion [e.g., sovereignty] over the Earth? Is it our ability to freely give of ourselves for the betterment of others? Is it more than these things?

Read that last sentence again. “... male and female he created them.” The current cultural climate in the West demanding that you stop using sex-based pronouns [he/she] and start using sex-neutral ones strikes at the foundation of a Creator God and perpetuates the lie of evolution.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
She <i>(She is here)</i>	Her <i>(I called her)</i>	Her <i>(Her hands are wet)</i>	Hers <i>(That is hers)</i>	Herself
He	Him	His	His	Himself
Ze	Zir	Zir	Zirs	Zirself
Xe	Xem	Xir	Xirs	Xirself
Sie	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themself

them.



Let this chart sink in for a moment. This is the result of years' worth of debate, and countless hours and dollars of "higher education" spent coming up with these new pronouns simply to avoid **REALITY**.

"Once you deny reality, it immediately begins working against you." -- unknown.

If the zealots within the religion of "equalism" can coerce us to give voice to the lie that there is no male or female, then they can make us say or believe any lie.

The lesson correctly notes that at the end of Creation, things were perfect and asks, "what happened?"

What happened, indeed?

From the bottom of Sabbath's lesson: What does the Bible teach about origins? What kind of relationship did God want with humanity? What was the purpose of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What hope was given to Adam and Eve immediately after they fell?

Great questions. Do we have any answers? Do we only use Scripture to answer these questions of origins? Does science and experience play any role?

SUNDAY

Turtles All the Way Down

Read the 1st paragraph in Sunday's lesson then cue the flat earth contingent bombarding us with e-mails and social [disease] media messages.

The lesson asserts that God does not attempt to prove He's Creator – He expects us to take it on faith. Is this correct?

It is inconsistent with the God I know. The God I [now] know provides ample **EVIDENCE** that He's Creator and invites me to examine the **EVIDENCE** and leaves me free to accept or reject the **EVIDENCE**.

MONDAY

In the Image of the Maker

Again, I ask what does it mean to be made in "God's Image"?

Some say it's the ability to bring forth life in our image, but most of nature has that ability as well, so is procreation really what distinguishes humans from other animals?



What is nature's prime driving force in procreating? **Instinct.**

How do humans differ, or do we? Is his bringing any Scripture to memory?

¹⁰...and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt passion and despise authority. Reckless, self-centered, they speak abusively of angelic majesties without trembling, ¹¹whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a demeaning judgment against them before the Lord. ¹²But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, using abusive speech where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, ¹³suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. 2 Peter 2: 10-13.

Are we not called to use our reason, guided by a clear conscience, and discernment to engage our wills to choose to act in accordance with God's design laws for human procreation and everything else?

See if this quote adds any insights:

"Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is "the express image" (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will." PP 45.

The lesson asserts that both Adam and Eve were made "from the same material." Is this accurate? Adam was made from Earth. Eve was made from Adam. Consider what men relate best to – it's the world [Earth] we live in. We test, experiment, explore our earth. Now consider what women relate best to – it's men [e.g. relationships].

"Men test ideas. Women test men." Jordan Peterson.

Consider the EGW quote at the end of Monday's lesson...

"...Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved **and protected by him.**" PP 46. emphasis mine.

What on earth did Eve need protection from in perfect Eden?

TUESDAY

God and Humankind Together.



God tells Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply -- to fill the Earth and “subdue” it. Again, what needed subduing in a perfect Creation? What did Eve need protection from?

In Genesis 1: 29, God tells mankind He has given them *every* plant yielding seed and *every* tree that has fruit yielding seed as their food. In Genesis 2: 16, 17 God told Adam he may eat from *every* tree in the garden **EXCEPT** one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Are these passages ringing any bells regarding their eventual fall? Hint: See Wednesday’s lesson.

God initiated the relationship with mankind. He introduced Eve to Adam and presided over their wedding. He came and walked & talked with them both in the cool of the evening [Gen. 3:8], and they were visited by angels who educated them regarding the fall of Lucifer and his host as well as the design laws of Heaven.

“The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe— “the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men’s study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God’s glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, “the balancings of the clouds,” the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God’s name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. PP 50.

WEDNESDAY

At the Tree.

It is important to review what our law lens is when we contemplate God placing the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” in the midst of Eden. If we have an imposed law viewpoint then the tree was an arbitrary test of loyalty and obedience, and acknowledgement of God’s sovereignty. If we have a *design* law viewpoint then the tree was necessary for the development of character in our first parents in accordance with the Laws of Truth, worship, exertion, liberty, and Love.

It was a simple task. Avoid eating of the fruit of one tree.



Consider Satan's question to Eve: "Did God say you may not eat from any tree in the garden?" Implied in this question is the premise that God is stingy, and selfish. He does not really care about His creation; He just wants to lord his sovereignty over it.

Now consider Eve's reply to Satan: "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ^{but} from the fruit of the tree, which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" Emphasis mine.

Eve is recorded as the first human to lie about God. God never forbade them from "touching" the fruit [according to Scripture], and in fact, Mrs. White states that Satan used this against Eve when he placed the fruit in her hand, and she did not immediately die.

THURSDAY

Breaking the Relationship

Eve was deceived into sin. Adam "listened to his wife" [Gen 3: 17] and sinned willingly.

Does the law of gravity treat differently the person who was tricked in to jumping off a cliff and the person who jumps willingly? Do the laws of health treat differently the person who ignorantly eats a poor diet and refuses to exercise and the person who willingly does these things? To ask is to laugh. I think this is one of the best evidence that God's law is design law and not imposed law. If His law is imposed, Eve could have simply been "pardoned", or God could have chosen "not to prosecute" because she was deceived. Adam, on the other hand, would have had to die.

"Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth. Notwithstanding the sophistry of Satan to the contrary, it is always disastrous to disobey God. We must set our hearts to know what is truth. All the lessons which God has caused to be placed on record in His word are for our warning and instruction. They are given to save us from deception. Their neglect will result in ruin to ourselves. Whatever contradicts God's word, we may be sure proceeds from Satan." PP 52.

In the garden, God told the universe of a coming redeemer – a Remedy for the condition that mankind had brought on itself. The entire rest of the Old Testament is the history of God's actions and restraint in order to bring the Remedy to Earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and Satan's efforts to prevent it.