

Creation, Again

Origins

Lesson #13 for March 30, 2013

Scriptures: Revelation 21:1-5; Genesis 3:19; 1 Corinthians 15:52-58; Genesis 6:11-13; Isaiah 11:6-9; John 14:1-3.

1. In this lesson we will discuss what needs to happen in order to eliminate sin and sinners and all traces of evil and to create a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.
2. Read 2 Peter 3:10-13. These verses seem to suggest that the heavens and the earth will be destroyed and replaced. How complete will the destruction of our earth be? In the history of the final events through the second and third coming, at what point will these new heavens and new earth be re-created? Since the New Jerusalem is to come down and settle on a plain created by the splitting of the Mount of Olives, does that seem like God will have created a new earth? (Zechariah 14:4)
3. As you look forward to life in heaven and the new earth, what do you look forward to the most? Think of all the things so common and dominant in our world that you will be happy to leave behind: death, sin, murder, adultery, lying, stealing, deceit, selfishness, etc. Can you even imagine a world without those?
4. But, these ideas pose a huge problem for those who do not believe God created our heavens and our earth back in the beginning. If theistic evolution is true, will God need to start all over again through a whole new evolutionary process in order to reestablish a new world? If that is the case, how could this earth be saved to be a part of it? And if God can re-create the heavens and the earth, why not admit that He created it the first time?
5. Surely, we do not believe any of the so-called evolutionary processes will be present in the new earth. And if we indeed believe in the Darwinian evolutionary idea, when we die there could be no resurrection because there would be no God.
6. Read Revelation 21:1-5. What do you like best in these verses? Clearly, death, disease, and sin were never intended to be a part of human existence. Now that God has succeeded in His great plan of redemption, it will be possible to eliminate these things forever.
7. And if God is not going to come again and re-create our heaven and our earth saving the righteous and eliminating sin and sinners, what was the point of His coming the first time?
8. Read Genesis 2:2; 3:19. The Scriptures state very plainly that Adam—and for that matter, all the other creatures on earth except Eve—was created from dirt. Some Hebrew scholars have suggested that the word should be *clods* or even *clay*. But, there was another part to the lives of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that is perhaps even more important. They had daily access to the tree of life. What do we know about that tree of life?

Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. [Revelation 22:2] Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like

gold mixed with silver. *Early Writings* 17.1

9. There are places on this earth where it is possible to drive a car through an opening in the base of a large tree. But, I doubt that anyone has seen a river running through the middle of a tree. There is no evidence that the original tree of life in the Garden of Eden had a river through it. Furthermore, if the tree of life is to provide fruit for all of the righteous, it will have to be enormously fruitful. Once again, we see that the glimpses we have of heaven cannot possibly explain everything that will take place there.
10. Read Job 19:26. No doubt, Adam's body has deteriorated, and the individual atoms and molecules have been separated and recycled probably millions of times. But, that is no problem for God. He can re-create Adam just as he was before. Surely, it is clear that the resurrection is just as much an act of creation as was the original creation.
11. Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. God will give us new bodies that will never have an ache or pain or disease or death. Death will be destroyed—thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14,15)
12. Have you ever heard a scientific explanation of the resurrection? Science has nothing to say on the subject. And if there is no resurrection, there is nothing beyond this life. Do people who believe in theistic evolution consider this detail?
13. Read Genesis 1:27,28 and John 12:31. Adam was created to be the head of this world's family. He was a direct son of God (Luke 3:38) and should have gathered with the sons of God in the councils of heaven. (Job 1&2) But, Adam yielded his dominion to Satan who has claimed ever since that he is the ruler of this earth. But, Christians know that Jesus came and lived and died to defeat Satan and to take away his claim to this earth. (Matthew 28:18; Revelation 12:10; John 12:31) Christ's victory on the cross guarantees us that truth and righteousness will finally be victorious over sin and death. More than that, the righteous will judge with God in heaven. (2 Timothy 2:11,12; Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3) But, the righteous will certainly not spend all their time sitting on thrones, judging the wicked.

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

14. What will be the result of our having open and free communion with angels and even God Himself? What will it be like to talk to our guardian angels?
15. In the world as we know it, predation and the "food chain" are an essential part of the balance of nature. But, clearly, this was not the case in the Garden of Eden. Nothing there was to die. What are the implications of nothing ever dying? Will we be allowed to pick flowers and put them in our homes? Will we ever want to replace them? What will happen to the ones that we remove? There are many animals here on this earth and especially things like insects that reproduce at an unbelievably rapid rate. One scientist calculated what would happen if a single pair of flies had enough food and if nothing killed them and if all of their offspring survived as well as all of the offspring of their offspring. Assuming every fly survived over the next six months, the earth would be covered with flies 49 feet thick! Clearly, God will have to put the brakes on some of that reproduction!

16. Ellen White spoke about three curses that affected our earth in the early days: 1) The curses that resulted from the sins of Adam and Eve; 2) The curse that resulted from Cain's killing Abel; and 3) The curse that resulted from the flood. What do we know about the earth and its inhabitants before the flood? (Genesis 6:11-13; 9:2-4) People had become incredibly wicked. After the flood, human beings were allowed to eat meat—however, as far as possible with the blood removed. Did consumption of that meat have something to do with the very rapid decline in the length of human lives? Animals were afraid of human beings, and we assume that man's dominion over the animals was considerably diminished. But, that will not be the case in the new earth. (Isaiah 65:25; 11:6-9) No doubt, since we were small children, we heard and were taught about the time when we would be able to pet the lions and play with all kinds of animals without any danger to ourselves. Some very beautiful pictures have been painted by artists trying to imagine what that peaceful world will be like.
17. As we know, "Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his maker."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 7. When sin entered our world, drastic changes took place in this arrangement. Read Genesis 3:24; Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 5:24-26. As a result of sin, God's glory became deadly to us. What actually happened that caused this incredible change? Was there a basic change in our physiology? We are told that at the second coming, "The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked." (*Desire of Ages* 107.4) How is that possible? What is different about the very nature of our beings that will lead some to die in God's glory while it gives others eternal life?
18. Read John 14:1-3 and Revelation 22:3-5. The great news for the righteous is that God has gone to prepare places for us. Once again, we will be able to hold direct communion with Him and see Him face-to-face. Finally, God's original plan for the human race will be fulfilled.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. **The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character.** As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise. . .

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

19. As we look at some of the verses in the Bible describing our future home, is it really possible for us to imagine what it will be like? We cannot even imagine what the Garden of Eden was like! Paul and the other apostles suffered a lot in their lives here on this earth. But, they looked forward to a life which they believed would be so glorious that the trials and troubles of this earth would not even come to mind. (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians

4:16,17)

20. Can we really picture in our minds what the new earth will be like? Our minds can only imagine things with which we are somewhat familiar. We use ideas and mental pictures that have been stored in memory to try to imagine what things will be like in the future. But, the truth is the we have never seen anything even close to the glorious new earth which will be our future home. Primarily for this reason, it is very difficult for us to picture what it will be like.
21. Christians have said repeatedly in the past that if we want to live in heaven, heaven must live in us now. What does that imply?
22. Will there be any reason to be afraid of God? Would you feel comfortable going up to God and giving Him a big hug? Try to imagine what it will be like to meet with God at least every Sabbath and to discuss what you have learned and discovered in the previous week and to have Him suggest some exciting new discoveries for the following week? Will we be able to see with our own eyes into the subatomic world and watch atoms and molecules in their activity? Will we be able not only to see but also to travel to the most distant portions of the universe? When we suggest that God will destroy the heavens and the earth and make them new, does that involve only our solar system?
23. Heaven will be a place where everyone is loving and kind and always looking out for others. Selfishness will be totally alien to that environment. And what would happen if sinners were allowed to enter heaven?

Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; **the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture.** His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence. (GC 670.2)

Satan is allowed a thousand years on this earth between the second and third comings to begin to realize what his rebellion has cost him and others. Revelation 21:1-5 give us two links back to the creation story in the Garden of Eden: 1) The “serpent,” and 2) A world in total destruction which is “without form and void.” (Genesis 1:2) Revelation 6 seems to be a reversal of Genesis 1! If you can, try to imagine the thoughts that will go through the mind of Satan during those thousand years. By contrast, try to imagine the experience of the righteous holding unlimited communion with God. Can we even take it in?

© 2013, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials, and we might even want to share good ideas with others. So, let us know.

Info@theox.org

Last Modified: February 16, 2013

C:\WP\Origins\SS-13-Origins-2013_03_30-Fin+.wpd