

January 3-9, 2022

Genesis 1-2; Moses 2-3; Abraham 4-5

“IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH”

Summary: *Genesis 1. God creates this earth and its heaven and all forms of life in six days—The creative acts of each day are described—God creates man, both male and female, in His own image—Man is given dominion over all things and is commanded to multiply and fill the earth.*

Genesis 2. The Creation is completed—God rests on the seventh day—The prior spirit creation is explained—Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden—They are forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—Adam names every living creature—Adam and Eve are married by the Lord.

Moses 2. God creates the heavens and the earth—All forms of life are created—God makes man and gives him dominion over all else.

Moses 3. God created all things spiritually before they were naturally upon the earth—He created man, the first flesh, upon the earth—Woman is a help meet for man.

Abraham 4. The Gods plan the creation of the earth and all life thereon—Their plans for the six days of creation are set forth.

Abraham 5. The Gods finish Their planning of the creation of all things—They bring to pass the Creation according to Their plans—Adam names every living creature.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What pre-biblical texts also relate a creation-account?

Before the Bible was written, as we know it, there were textual correspondences

between peoples in the Middle East. The oldest known writing may be the Ebla Tablets found in today's Syria. Approximately eighteen thousand ceramic plates were found. They contained a language that had never been known before. Even more astounding was a set of plates that contained a sort of dictionary that translated the 'unknown' language into one that scholars had already learned to decipher. Included in the Ebla Tablets were names of people and places that are mentioned in the Bible. Examples given in 1976 by a Professor Giovanni Pettinato, an

epigrapher of the University of Rome, are; “. . . A man is the father; Ish-i-lum, A man is the god; I-sa-Ya, Ya has gone forth; . . . Ib-na-Malik, Milik has created. Hebrew scholars recognize remarkable similarities to later Hebrew in the Old Testament, and Professor Pettinato himself states . . . Many of these names occur in the same form in the Old Testament, so that a certain interdependence between the culture of Ebla and that of the Old Testament must be granted.” “The vocabularies at Ebla were distinctively Semitic: the word “to write” is k-t-b (as in Hebrew), while that for “king” is “malikum,” and that for “man” is “adamu.” The closeness to Hebrew is surprising.” (Institution Creation Research, <https://www.icr.org/article/ebla-its-impact-bible-records>) They also contain an earlier (than Biblical) written account of the creation. What members of the Church of Jesusa Christ of Latter-day Saints would

find interesting is that there are two creations listed. With the discovery of The Dead Sea Scrolls, a so-called 'Genesis Apocryphon' scroll was revealed. It dates back twenty or more centuries and also contains reference to the creation. The text style is similar to the revelatory testimonies of Moses and Abraham. Jewish legends and traditions from a collection called "the Agaddah" describe man's relationship with creation. "In their search for lessons on man's place in God's universe, the rabbis discussed at great length the biblical account of the creation of Adam, which is outlined above. (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How is marriage and the principle of dominion, a likeness of the creation?

Adam and Eve were married by God before there was any death in the world. That was an eternal marriage. They, then taught the law of eternal marriage to their children and their children's children. As the years passed, wickedness entered the hearts of the people and the authority to perform this sacred ordinance was taken from the earth. Through the Restoration of the gospel, eternal marriage has been restored to earth. Early revelations to Joseph Smith taught that humans are created in the image of God and that God cares intimately for His children. In the Book of Mormon, a prophet "saw the finger of the Lord" and was astonished to learn that human physical forms were truly made in the image of God. (Ether 3:6) In another early revelation, Enoch "walked with God" witnessed God weeping over His creations. (Genesis 5:22) When Enoch asked, "How is it thou canst weep?" he learned that God's compassion toward human suffering is integral to His love. (Moses 7:31-37) Joseph Smith also learned that God desires that His children receive the same kind of exalted existence of which He partakes. As God declared, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of

man." (Moses 1:39) "The *Midrash* (ancient Jewish scriptural commentary) observes that each newly created form of life ruled over what preceded it in the order of creation. Adam and Eve were thus created last in order that they should rule over all creation, and in order that they should be able to enter a banqueting hall that was waiting ready for them. In the words of the *Midrash*, "The matter may be likened to an emperor's building a palace, consecrating it, preparing the feast, and only then inviting the guests." On the other hand, the rabbis taught that Adam was created last, so that if he should become conceited, he could be told: "The gnat was created before you."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Where did the term "Become like God" begin?

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:27) "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) "These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:70) In theology, the word *apotheosis* refers to the idea that an individual can be or has been raised to godlike stature. Mankind was also created, to create. "The word "sin" is nowhere to be found in the biblical account. And while it's clear God is displeased with this act of defiance, cursing Eve with the pain of bearing children and condemning Adam to labor for his sustenance, it's possible to read this story not as a morality tale about the perils of disobedience, but as the beginning of humanity's path to fulfilling its destiny." "And in so doing, Adam and Eve exercise the very freedom of choice that is essential for their progeny's choices to have any meaning at all. Had Adam and

Eve remained in the garden, blindly obedient to a God with the capacity to cast them out and condemn them to a lifetime of physical toil, their choice to do God's will would be of little significance. Obeying God only has value if we have the option of doing otherwise. Theocrats of the world, take note." "One way to understand the famous line in . . . which God determines to make man "in our image, after our likeness. . . is that all human beings carry a spark of divinity with them — that they are, in effect, holy as God is holy . . . this is the most fundamental principle in all of *Torah*." "The first thing we learn about God in *Parashat Bereshit* (the creation account) is . . . that God is a creator. And it is creativity — the capacity to think and act in free and novel ways, to act counter to the natural order, to rebel — that constitutes the shared ground between man and God. This is why God responds to Adam and Eve's rebellion by saying the act had made man "like one of us," which happens to be the exact promise the snake had made to Eve in tempting her to eat from the tree in the first place, assuring her that "you will be like divine beings knowing good and bad." "Freedom isn't necessarily pretty. Often, it's scary. But it is essential to the full flowering of our humanity." (Ben Harris, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/parashat-bereshit-being-like-god>)

What's in a name?

In the Jewish community, names are of paramount importance. From the boy's *Brit Mila* (circumcision) or the girl's *Simhat Bat* (naming ceremony) to the death, the name will identify them in their

community. A Jew is often given two names, a Hebrew name, and a secular name. The Hebrew name is used for Jewish rituals and prayers, where it's usually followed by the name of the parents. The secular name is used in day-to-day life. The meaning and numerology of the names are also considered significant. Each Hebrew letter has a numerical value. A numerical formula of the Hebrew name, "Messiah," links it to the meaning of "Anointed," and "Salvation." For the religious Moslem, going to Mecca is a once in a lifetime goal. Along with the washings done at Mecca and the wearing of white robe-like clothing, Moslems are given a "new name," one that they must not reveal—for it is theirs to use in the next life when they approach Allah. Biblical names are rich in symbolism. Some names imply origin. Scripture opens with the Book of Genesis detailing the beginnings of Creation. The word "genesis" itself means "origin." God named the first human "Adam," likely derived from the Hebrew word for "earth" or "ground" and reminds us that Adam, as the first human, was created from the dust of the ground (**Genesis 2:7**). Adam then named his wife Eve, a name that means "living" and commemorates Eve's role as "the mother of all the living" (**Genesis 3:20**). Other Biblical names may denote purpose, symbolism, traits, or environment. The etymology and history of last (or surnames) names only began recently in the middle age centuries. There is a significance that we are privileged to "take the name of the Lord" upon ourselves! (**Doctrine and Covenants 20:77; Moroni 4:3.**)