

Symbols, types and shadows

Understanding the purpose of God requires us to recognise and appropriately interpret the language of the Scriptures. The Scriptures use prophetic language to communicate God's plan and to describe the way that it proceeds. We need to distinguish between 'types', 'shadows', and 'symbols'. These are terms used by the New Testament writers to help us understand the relationship between Old and New Covenant realities.

A type is referring to a reality that is yet to come. In this regard, a type speaks prophetically. God is not in the type, but the type declares or reveals His word and His will. For example, we do not see God in the elements of creation. This would be Pantheism, which is the belief that God is identical with the cosmos, and that everything in the universe composes God. Rather, we see His work and the outcome of His word in the creation. An *antitype* is the fulfilment or completion of a created reality that reveals a truth, explained by the Scriptures. For example, baptism is the antitype of Noah's deliverance from the flood.

A *shadow* is a reflection or image of an existing reality. It is the physical form of a heavenly reality. For example, Moses' tabernacle and David's temple were shadows of the true tabernacle in heaven. God directed Moses to make the tabernacle and its furniture according to the pattern he had seen in the heavens. *Symbols* belong to the shadow. They reveal a heavenly reality that is being manifest in time. Whereas God is not found in a type, He was seen and accessible in the shadow. He was seen in, or upon, the symbols that had been built by Moses and David as the furniture of the tabernacle or temple. The actual glory of God, called the '*Shekinah*', was in the ark of the covenant within the temple. This piece of temple furniture was a symbol of the throne of grace in heaven.

References:

Rom 5:14 Act 7:44
Heb 9:8-11 Heb 11:19
Heb 8:5 Heb 10:1
Col 2:17

Further Study:

1 Peter 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

The unfolding purpose of God

As we consider the plan of God, we note that it is unfolding. The work which God has already finished before the foundation of the world, is being progressively accomplished in time. To understand God's plan and the way it is unfolding, our orientation begins at the *conclusion* of the matter and moves to its *beginning*. With this in mind, we can *identify* and *summarise* three key phases of God's plan.

The first element is the finished mystery. In the book of Revelation, John recorded that when the seventh angel was about to sound 'the mystery of God is finished'. When the angel sounded, John saw the *perfected company of the sons of God*. He described them as a woman, standing in the ark of the covenant, clothed with glory and prepared as a bride for her husband. She travailed to bring forth a 'manchild' administration that would rule or shepherd the new heavens and earth with a rod of iron.

The second element is creation and the firstfruits of sonship. God created this present universe, its physical realm and biological life, as the context in which sons of men are brought forth as the sons of God, through the pathway authored by the Son of God. If we are perfected in Him, we will be part of the finished mystery.

The third element is the creation of the angelic administration. Prior to creating this present heavens and earth, God created a spiritual realm called 'heaven', and the orders of the angels. The angels were created as a servant order to the unfolding purpose of God to bring forth a multitude of sons. They continue to serve with power in this world and in the new heavens and earth.

References:

Rev 10:7 Rev 12:1, 5
Rev 21:2, 9 Heb 1:14
Psa 103:20-21 Dan 6:22
Gen 32:1-2

Further Study:

Psalm 66

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The creation of the angels

According to God's purpose, the angels were created as a servant order to the heirs of God, who would later be brought forth as His sons. Angels and their heavenly realm were created in advance of the physical realm. However, the sons of God were named and known *before* in the fellowship of *Elohim*. Thus, in terms of God's finished work, we can say that we came before the angels.

Angels are spiritual beings. Their realm is a spiritual heaven and it has a temple. They have access to the *Shekinah* glory of God. For example, the prophet Isaiah witnessed the Lord sitting on a throne, with seraphim above Him. There are different orders of angels with different responsibilities. For example, the cherubim are worship leaders and the seraphim are messengers of the Lord of hosts. Concerning Lucifer (Satan), God declared, 'The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created'. We see that Lucifer was created fully complete for the work of worship and priesthood to which he had been given. This was his domain. All the angels were complete on the day of their creation and have been assigned a domain of service.

Nine precious stones were Lucifer's covering. These stones can be likened to the twelve stones that were set in the breastplate worn by the high priest of the earthly temple. The stones that the priest wore were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. They represented an entire covenant people. The implication is that Satan was a priest of worship, and the nine stones that were part of his covering represented the angelic host, organised or known within nine companies or orders, with differing authority, domains and powers.

References:

Heb 1:14 Job 38:4-7
Psa 104:4 Isa 6:1-2
Luk 2:13-15 Exo 28:17-21
Eze 28:13

Further Study: Ephesians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3

The fall of the angels

Just as they were complete in the day of their creation, the angels were finitely numbered. In contrast, we know that the sons of Abraham are an innumerable company through which the righteousness of God is multiplied forever in the new heavens and earth. Adam was created lower than the angels. However, unlike the sons of God, the angels do not have possession of their own soul or of the divine nature. Although the angels do not have possession of their soul, God has made them accountable. Angels that have sinned and fallen are judged to hell. In contrast to the redemption that has been made available to man, angels have no point of recovery when they fall. An angel falls when they do not keep their own domain, but abandon what the Scriptures describe as 'their proper abode'.

The fall of Satan and his demonic angels was on account of their unwillingness to serve the new creation that God desired to bring forth. The Scriptures record that Lucifer (Satan) was filled with pride on account of his beauty and splendour and, instead of fulfilling his role as a servant to God's unfolding purpose, unrighteousness was found in him *because of his trading*. He was filled with violence and sought to destroy mankind. He did this through deception. It is helpful to note this principle, for the book of Revelation foretells that a third of the bride company falls following the birth of the manchild. When the manchild is born, the administrative priority for the new heavens and earth shifts to this company. We surmise that the fall of those from the bride company is on account of their trading, just as the angels who fell were unwilling to serve the creation of God.

References:

Isa 9:7 Jud 1:6
2Pe 2:4 2Pe 3:13
Eze 28:16-17 Gen 3:1, 13
Rev 12:4-5

Further Study:

Luke 20

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

The creation of man

In love, God created man from the dust of the ground, breathing into him the breath of lives and making him a *living soul*. Mankind was created mortal within a physical world, yet he is spiritual and has been given possession of his own soul. In contrast, although all the animals have spirit, they do not have eternal longevity.

Mankind was created lower than the angels, but was predestined to possess the divine nature as sons of God. This was never the destiny of the angels. Jesus was made lower than the angels so that we could be redeemed to a context of fellowship far above the angelic realm. We have been raised and seated in heavenly places with Him. This is not a more powerful existence. Rather, it is the privilege of fellowship with God, in Christ.

The physical creation is the context in which God is fulfilling His purpose to bring forth many sons to glory. The creation, and all that is therein, is not just the outcome of evolutionary randomness. It is, in fact, the context in which our predestination as the sons of God is coming forth. We recognise that the natural environment is compatible with our predestination.

Yahweh Son, who had become the Father's Son, was always going to come in flesh as a Son of Man, to be brought forth by resurrection into immortality and received back into the glory that He had before. It was always God's plan for the Father's Son to be the 'firstfruits' of all the predestined sons of God. And according to the will of God, we were to be brought forth by the word of truth, to be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

References:

Gen 2:7 Heb 2:6-7, 9
Heb 1:5 1Co 15:23
Eph 2:4-6
Jas 1:18

Further Study:

Genesis 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 5

Creation is a type

The creation is a prophetic 'type' that 'speaks'. The creation itself reveals the word of God and His Everlasting Covenant. The word speaks through the type. God created the natural universe as a tabernacle. It is a type of the new heavens and earth. King David wrote that 'the heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.'

The sun in our heavens, along with the moon and stars and all of the planets that reflect its light, is a type of the *Shekinah* of God. The light of the sun sustains all natural life. Every living creature is nourished by the light that is converted to life through photosynthesis in the vegetation on which they feed. This was God's design.

The natural light, through the life it sustains, is a proclaimer of the law of the Lord, and it shows His law to be perfect. The language of nature, including the language of every species of living thing, declares the wisdom of God. For example, we are exhorted by the wise man to consider the way of the ants and locusts. The created realm itself rejoices in its Creator. Our own natural senses can be affected by the discourse of nature. We can be uplifted by its song and its many and varied forms of communication. We must be careful, however, that we do not begin to worship the creation in the deluded belief that God and nature are the same.

References:

Psa 33:6 Gen 1:29-30
Isa 40:25-26 Pro 30:25, 27
Psa 96:11-12 Psa 65:13

Further Study:

Psalm 19

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 8

The word of the prophets

We can see the wonderful works of God and hear His testimony in all of nature. It reveals the law of the Lord, His precepts and commandments through which creation was brought forth, and speaks of a heavenly destiny promised to the sons of God. For this reason, every person is without excuse concerning the knowledge of God. However, there are many people in this world who do not fear or acknowledge God. They have become futile in their speculations about the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The prophets of old connected the speech of nature to a revelation given by the Holy Spirit. Their written interpretation of this speech is called the ‘Scriptures of the prophets’, and gives us understanding of God’s covenant plan. The prophets drew from the natural types to communicate the unfolding purpose of God. Ezekiel, for example, used the type of the trees in Eden to describe the growing up and expansion of the kingdoms of the world. Similarly, Isaiah referred to rivers, waves and sand to proclaim the heritage of Israel, if they had obeyed the word of the Redeemer.

Creation as a type illustrates how the prophetic word works. Prophecy is pointing forward to a reality that is yet to come. We recognise, then, that there is no prophetic word in the new heavens and new earth because the word is inherent in the substance that will have come. In this regard, Paul noted, ‘For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away’. Furthermore, Peter observed that in Christ ‘we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts’.

References:

Rom 16:26 Eze 31:8
Isa 48:17-19 1Co 13:9-10
2Pe 1:19 Isa 51:3

Further Study:

Romans 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 9

The garden of Eden

God planted a garden in the region of Eden. He connected His *heavenly* Paradise, where His throne is, to this garden. We can affirm, from the account of Lucifer's scope of service, that the garden which God planted was connected to the Paradise of the third heaven. Before he fell, Lucifer *was in Eden*. He was the covering cherub, at the heart of the third heaven. God had set him on *the holy mountain of God* and he walked in the *midst of the stones of fire*.

When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, it was his context for fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this regard, man had direct access to the throne of grace. Adam was given a kingdom and a rulership. He was to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; ruling over every living thing from Eden. This was his mandate.

The life of Yahweh was made available for the predestined sons of God when the Lamb of God was slain from before the foundation of creation. This was the expression of *first love*, and set forth the flesh and blood of the Lamb as the life of new creation. It was to be their bread and their drink. Adam and Eve were able to eat and drink of this *Passover meal* through fellowship with Yahweh in the garden. They met with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit 'in the cool of the day'. This was the time of the *evening sacrifice* when God met with them and spoke with them. The evening sacrifice was the point of fellowship with God. In this fellowship, Adam and Eve ate the flesh and drank the blood of the Lamb of God, which are the elements of the Everlasting Covenant.

References:

Gen 2:8 Eze 28:13-14
 Gen 3:8-9 Gen 1:28
 1Pe 1:19-20 Exo 29:42
 Gen 14:18-19

Further Study: Genesis 9

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 10

Fellowship in the garden

It is interesting to note that the word 'cool' in Hebrew is '*ruach*' and can be translated 'wind, breeze, breath, spirit'. Jesus used the same imagery to describe a person who is *born of the Spirit*. He proclaimed, 'The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit'. The participation of Adam and Eve in the Passover elements was a fellowship of the Spirit. In this context, they would eventually have been brought forth as spiritual sons of God.

The *bread of life* was in the garden, encompassed within the tree of life. The tree of life contains the wisdom of the word of life. This was the word of God's will that defined the works of man. This was also the reality for Jesus, the second Adam, who said that His food or bread was '*to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work*'.

The blood of the Lamb was available as life to Adam and Eve in the garden, because of their fellowship in the light with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The apostle John wrote, 'If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin'. Of course, before Adam and Eve fell, they had no need for cleansing. Rather, the blood was available for their life. When Yahweh met with Adam and Eve in the garden, the light of their lives was in that fellowship. The light clothed them. To understand what this may have been like, we remember that when Moses spoke with Yahweh, his face shone to such an extent that all the people were afraid of him.

References:

Joh 3:7-8 Pro 3:13-18
Gen 1:28-29 Gen 2:19
Joh 4:34 1Jn 1:7
Exo 34:29-35

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 10

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 11

The holy place of the true tabernacle

The extension of the Paradise of God to Eden as the abode of man, linked the earthly realm to the heavenly. In the garden, the key to fellowship with God in Paradise was the food they ate. In Moses' tabernacle and David's temple, which were shadows of the true tabernacle in heaven, the ark of the covenant became the link-point between earth and heaven for the Israelites. This is because it contained the *Shekinah* light of God. The glory of the *Shekinah* was the key to the tabernacle of Moses, and the connection to the heavenly Paradise.

Gethsemane was also a garden. Like the garden of Eden, it was a holy place of the Most High. It was the place of prayer and, as such, is our point of connection to the Paradise of heavenly places. In Gethsemane, the Son of God prayed to the Father, 'Not My will but Yours be done'. This was where He was strengthened by Eternal Spirit, and where His sweat became like great clots of blood falling upon Him. His prayer was the substance of the altar of incense, before the throne of grace.

Jesus Christ is both the 'Bread of life' and 'the Light of the world'. In Christ, the elements of food (the key to fellowship with God in the garden of Eden) and light, or glory (the key to fellowship with God in the temple shadow), are added together in the true temple of His body. From His body, the church which is likened to a woman, is brought forth. She will finally stand in the ark of the covenant with the *glory of light all around* her. This glory will be her garment. The perfected bride of Christ will bring forth sons of God as citizens of the new heavens and earth.

References:

Psa 80:1 Luk
22:42-45
Joh 12:46
Rev 21:11

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Hebrews 9

Proverbs 12

The tree of life

The Lord God planted the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden. This tree is now in the Paradise of God in heaven. Paradise is the place of the throne of God. It is a spiritual garden and a place of revelation from where the wisdom of God is made known. We are given a part in the tree of life. It provides food for us. Jesus was the tree of life in the garden of Gethsemane. His flesh and blood, as the elements of the New Covenant, were being put forth as the provision for our life. In Christ, we are able to eat from the tree of life, now! However, only priests with clean robes have a right to eat of the tree of life. The book of Revelation is clear that nothing unclean will have access to the presence of God. This highlights the need for a process of cleansing so that we can confidently approach the throne of grace.

In essence, the tree of life is the fullness of the incarnate and resurrected life of Christ. If we eat His flesh and blood, we have eternal life and will be raised on the last day. Those who partake of these elements abide in Christ and He abides in them. We appropriate the flesh and blood of Jesus as the elements of our resurrection body, by joining the fellowship of His offering and by obeying His word. As we eat and drink in a worthy manner, the leaves of the tree of life become healing for the nations as the word of God *in our mouths*. As we eat of Christ, the Tree of Life, we receive our desire, which is our name, works and life as a son of God. We are able to bear the fruit of righteousness.

References:

Gen 2:9

Rev 22:19

Joh 6:54-56

Pro 15:4

Rev 2:7

Isa 35:8

Pro 13:12

Pro 11:30

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 15

The source of the nations

The account of the garden of Eden as a type, extends beyond 'the tree of life' and 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. God caused *every tree* that was 'pleasing to the sight' and 'good for food' to grow in the garden, including these two trees. Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, recorded that a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden. From Eden, it divided into four rivers that watered the four regions of the ancient world. He also accounted that the region of Havilah, watered by the Pishon River, was known for its gold, bdellium and onyx stone. The prophet Ezekiel described how 'every precious stone' was the covering of Lucifer in the Paradise of Eden. These elements were prophetic types.

The river that watered the garden of Eden was a type of the 'river of life' coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the new heavens and new earth. This is the water that Jesus spoke of when He said, 'He who believes in Me ... from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'. He was speaking of the promise of the Holy Spirit. Earlier, Jesus explained that the water He gave would become in a person, a well of water springing up to eternal life. In the type, the river from Eden was watering the four corners of the known earth. The life for the whole world was coming out of Eden. The trees that God caused to grow in the garden were pictures of nations, peoples or individuals, with their distinctive characteristics. Assyria, for example, was described by Ezekiel as a cedar in Lebanon whose top was among the clouds. 'No tree *in God's garden* could compare with it in its beauty.'

References:

Gen 2:9-14 Rev 22:1
Eze 28:13 Eze 31:8
Joh 7:38

Further Study:

John 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

Stones and trees

The stones in Eden are part of the 'type' that utters prophetic speech concerning the nations and their people. These stones or minerals symbolise the empowerment, capacity, or glory of a nation. Certainly, the stones themselves did not give power, but rather, pointed to a spiritual dimension of the predestination of a nation or a person. There are many prophetic associations between precious stones and peoples in the Bible. For example, each of the twelve precious stones set in the breastpiece of the high priest was inscribed with the name of a tribe of Israel. Significantly, the imagery of precious stones is used in several prophetic Scriptures to describe the currency of trade by which nations became prominent and powerful. We can liken the stones to the riches or 'talents' that are given according to the predestined abilities of nations and people.

The trees depict a nation or a person growing up as a particular 'species' of tree, with corresponding characteristics or abilities. Then, as Jesus explained, talents or riches or power are given according to abilities. We recall that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a prophetic dream in which he was likened to a tree that 'grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth'. We note the significance of the way that Nebuchadnezzar's dream was communicated. 'The tree *grew* and *became* strong.' Jesus also taught that the kingdom of God 'is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it *grew* and *became* a tree'. The kingdom is like plants that grow to become what God predestined. This is so for each one of us who is born of the incorruptible seed of God's life.

References:

Exo 28:21 Mat 25:15
Dan 4:11-12 Luk 13:19
1Pe 1:24-25 Psa 72:16-17

Further Study:

Ezekiel 27

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

The predestination of nations

The theme of 'trees' in the prophetic Scriptures is revealing the kingdoms of the world and all the nations that lived under their shade. All the nations of the earth had their source in Eden. They did not just arise as a consequence of the fall. Speaking of Assyria, the Lord declared, 'I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, and all the trees of Eden which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it'. By referring to the nations as 'trees in the garden of Eden', Ezekiel was highlighting that the predestination of these nations was sourced in the Paradise of God. The word of that prophetic destiny is still to be realised, for God desires sons who are from every tribe and nation.

God sent Jonah to call Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, to repentance. It was God who had mercy on Nineveh. Consequently, it rose to be a mighty nation according to the will of God. Interestingly, Jesus Himself noted the repentance of those in Nineveh. In reference to Cyrus, king of Persia, the fourth world kingdom, Yahweh declared, 'Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand'. Cyrus himself understood that he had not ascended to rule on account of his own might, but because he had been appointed by God. Where the power and authority of a nation was misappropriated through trading and arrogance, their corruption was manifest. Assyria had set its top among the clouds, and its heart was 'haughty in its loftiness'. Satan's own aspiration was to 'ascend above the heights of the clouds' and to make himself 'like the Most High'. This is revealing the principle of 'Babylon'.

References:

Eze 31:6, 8-10
Isa 14:14
Isa 19:24-25
Mat 12:41
Isa 45:1
Ezr 1:2

Further Study:

Jonah 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

The principle of Babylon

The motivation of Nimrod, the first world king, to build the tower of Babel was 'come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name'. As a consequence of this aspiration, God confused the language of the people. The Hebrews called the city 'Babel', meaning 'confusion'. Interestingly, the Babylonians called the city 'bab-ili', meaning 'the gate of God'. Although Paradise is the context of meeting with God, it is also from here that authority is misappropriated.

When the nations were lifted up in pride on account of their misappropriation, they were judged. For example, Nebuchadnezzar believed that he had grown up because of his own majesty, rather than according to God's plan. Seven periods of time passed over Nebuchadnezzar 'in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men'. God raised these men up according to His will. But then they polluted their mandate according to the principle of Babylon. Babylon is the misappropriation of the mandate given by God to the nations of the world.

The seven periods of time that passed over Nebuchadnezzar were prophetic of seven world orders. These orders, or kingdoms, encompass the full history of mankind, in which God confuses and scatters the peoples of the nations who seek to ascend and misappropriate the authority of God. This is the meaning of the seven heads of the historic beast, spoken of in the book of Revelation. John saw 'a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having *seven heads* and ten horns'. The seven heads represent seven world kingdoms. And Babylon is the great city which reigns over all the kings of the earth.

References:

Gen 11:4 Isa 13:19-22
Rev 17:3, 18 Isa 42:8
Psa 83:15-18

Further Study: Daniel 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 19

The fall

Man fell into sin through disobedience. On account of sin, mankind was cast from the fellowship of Yahweh. They were no longer clothed with light, and knew that they were naked. They no longer had access to the throne of grace where their name, works and life were known. In this sense, they had been cast into the *land of forgetfulness*; a howling wilderness, devoid of the life of God. He determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation so that they might seek for God and find Him. If Adam had not sinned, mankind would have continued to partake of the elements of the covenant through fellowship with Yahweh. Adam was created mortal. However, in the fullness of time, at the end of a figurative gestation period, mankind would have been brought forth as spiritual sons of God by partaking of the tree of life.

We recognise that God did not predestine man to sin. As a living soul, man was given ownership of himself and was made accountable for his choices, his actions, and their consequences. Nevertheless, it is equally true that God knew that man would fall. In the foreknowledge of God, the elements of judgement and redemption for the recovery of every person were inherent within God's plan, so that they might be brought to glory. To highlight the point, we note that the Lamb was slain, and blood was provided even before we were created. This precious blood was the life of the New Covenant. The New Covenant was the substance and fulfilment of the Everlasting Covenant of sonship. Mankind was to receive this blood as their life. However, Peter explained that we were *redeemed* with precious blood, as of a Lamb. The blood of the Lamb was to be our life, *and* it was able to redeem us from our state of sin and death.

References:

Gen 3:7 Psa 88:12
Act 2:23 Luk 22:20
Joh 6:54 Act 17:26-27

Further Study: 1 Peter 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 22

The doorway to the garden

After the fall, mankind was separated from the love and life of God on account of sin. However, God's desire to bring many sons to glory was not altered. Judgement and redemption were the processes established by God to ensure the end of sin, and the recovery of each person who would avail themselves of grace through obedience to the word. A 'seven-times' judgement was proclaimed on humanity. In this context of judgement, God continued to unfold the process by which a person may be recovered to their place and participation in the finished mystery.

God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden, but the garden was not destroyed, nor was the tree of life removed. It was still the most holy place. God placed the cherubim and the flaming sword at the east of the garden to guard the way to the tree of life. The habitation of Adam and Eve became similar to the future camp of the nation of Israel. According to the pattern Moses had seen in heaven, he established the 'tabernacle of the tent of meeting' within the camp. Like the garden, the tent of meeting was oriented east to west. Furthermore, the veil separating the most holy place and containing the ark of the covenant, was woven with a cherubim which symbolically guarded the way to the ark of the covenant.

When Cain and Abel made offering, they would have come to the doorway of the garden of Eden. God had predestined Cain to be the head of the nations. However, Cain brought an offering to God that was sourced from the work of his own hand as a farmer, rather than according to the name that God had given to him. For this reason, God had no regard for him. In contrast, Abel's offering was accepted by God. He was evidently finding fellowship with God and fulfilling the name God had given to him.

References:

Heb 2:10

Gen 3:24

Act 7:44

Dan 9:24

Exo 25:18

Gen 4:1

Further Study:

Exodus 26

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

The corruption of mankind

When the Lord did not accept Cain's offering, he became very angry and his countenance fell. He was unwilling to overcome and master the sin that had been crouching at his door. Cain defaulted on his predestination and, through covetousness, robbed Abel of his life. His envy resulted in murder. Cain's attitude and actions typified the corruption of the sons of men who were brought forth under the curse of sin.

The sons of Cain departed from Eden and settled in the land of Nod. They were identified as 'the sons and daughters of men', distinguishing them from the sons of God who called upon the name of the Lord. They were wicked people, exemplified by Lamech who boasted of killing a man and then presumed upon the protection of God. When the sons of God (in the lineage of Seth) began to marry the daughters of men, God declared that His Spirit would no longer rule in man. The wickedness of man had reached a climax in the *mixture* of the sons of men and the sons of God, revealing the principle of Babylon. The children of these marriages produced 'mighty men', 'men of renown'. These men became prominent, and exercised authority over all the people. In a sense, they were like the trees whose 'tops were among the clouds'.

God proclaimed judgement on *all flesh*. However, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was one of the sons of God who maintained his walk with God. He was described as a righteous man, blameless in his time. He had sanctified himself from the corruption of his generation and, presumably, had continued to come to the gate of the garden to make offering. God revealed His plan to Noah and provided a way of escape for him and his family.

References:

Gen 4:7-8, 23-24, 26
Eze 31:10
Psa 53:2-3
2Pe 2:5

Further Study:

Genesis 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

The covenant with Abraham

As a consequence of the flood, the garden of Eden was destroyed. There was now no longer an established point of access to God. Noah's first response to his deliverance from the flood was to build an altar to the Lord, and to sacrifice one of every clean animal and bird. God met Noah and made covenant with him and blessed him. Offering became the means of fellowship with God. This knowledge of God would no doubt have been taught from one generation to the next. The genealogies recorded in the Scriptures seem to reveal that Abraham, the father of all who believe, is likely to have been about fifty years old when Noah died. If this was so, Abraham would have grown up understanding the significance of offering. Certainly, we see that offering was a regular and immediate response that he made to the proceeding word of God to him.

The Lord came to Abraham and established the Everlasting Covenant with him and his descendants. God swore by Himself that He would bless and multiply the children of Abraham. This blessing was the promise of partaking of the divine nature. All the nations of the earth would have access to this blessing in Abraham, *through faith*. The nation of Israel became a symbol of a company of people from every tribe and nation who would be connected to God's covenant purpose. The adoption was given to Abraham. This was then confirmed to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. The psalmist proclaimed, 'He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the *covenant* which He made with Abraham, and His *oath* to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a *statute*, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.'

References:

Gen 8:20 Gen 9:8-10
Gen 12:7-8 Gen 13:18
Heb 6:13-14 Gal 3:7, 9
Psa 105:8-10

Further Study:

Genesis 17

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

The statute confirmed to Jacob

A covenant is an agreement that involves a *promise*. The Everlasting Covenant made with Abraham was the promise of sonship. This promise was *validated* in the oath that God made with Isaac. He was the firstborn son of the covenant promise, who had figuratively been received back from the dead through the blood of the Lamb. The covenant and the oath were then *confirmed* to Jacob for a statute. A statute is a decree or law, issued by a ruler, which governs the conduct of a person or persons. It was to Jacob that God revealed His house and the priesthood of the true tabernacle. Although the word and blessing of the covenant had been confirmed to each generation, there was a progression in its proclamation from one patriarch to the next.

Jacob, fleeing the murderous fury of his brother Esau, had set off for Haran. As the sun was setting, he came to a certain place and decided to spend the night there. Interestingly, this was likely to have been the *time of the evening sacrifice*, which was later instituted by Moses as part of the law covenant. Jacob took one of the stones that was there and placed it under his head as he lay down to sleep. He dreamed of a ladder that was set on the earth, with its tip reaching to heaven. The angels of God were ascending and descending on the ladder. The Scriptures record that Yahweh stood *above the ladder* and confirmed the blessing of Abraham to Jacob. The language of this passage can also be rendered, 'Yahweh stood *beside him*', evidently on earth. Yahweh spanned the top of the ladder in heaven, and the bottom of the ladder on earth!

References:

Rom 4:11 Gal 3:7
Heb 11:19 Gal 4:28
Gen 28:10-22 Exo 29:41

Further Study:

Genesis 22

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 26

The cornerstone of the true temple

Following his prophetic vision, Jacob woke up and declared, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than *the house God*, and this is *the gate of heaven*'. He took the stone that had been under his head, set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. Furthermore, he made a vow, saying, '*This stone ... will be God's house*, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You'. Jacob was raising his hands to the Most High, just as Abraham had done when, having eaten the bread and the wine, he gave a tenth of all that he had to *Melchizedek*. In vowing to tithe, Jacob was recognising that he had come to the house of God and to its great High *Priest*.

Jacob had seen the true tabernacle of heaven and its priesthood. It was not like the type represented in the creation, nor was it like the shadow of Moses' tabernacle that was yet to come. This temple was *vertical*, connecting heaven and earth. As Jacob noted, it was the gate of the third heaven, the Paradise of God. The vision was specifically of Christ. We know this because Jesus testified of Himself, saying, 'ou will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending *on the Son of Man*'.

Jesus was the Cornerstone upon which Jacob had laid his head. That stone was manifest in the olive grove of the garden of Gethsemane, when the oil of the Spirit of God was poured over the Lord Jesus Christ, anointing Him both as the Temple and as a King Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. As the Son of Man, He was a Living Stone that had been rejected by men but was chosen and precious in the sight of God.

References:

Gen 28:17,22 Gen 14:18-20

Joh 1:51 2Co 12:2

Eph 2:20 Isa 28:16

Further Study: 1 Peter 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 29

A corporate priesthood

The corporate priesthood of Christ was evident in Jacob's vision of Yahweh above the ladder in heaven, and at the foot of the ladder on earth. Yahweh declared through the prophet Isaiah, 'Heaven is My *throne* and earth is My *footstool*'. The throne, which was later symbolised in Moses' tabernacle by the ark of the covenant, is in heaven. The imagery of the earth as His footstool reminds us of the revelation of Jesus Christ, whose feet were described as burnished bronze, speaking of the bronze altar of burnt offering.

The vertical orientation of the ladder, and the ascending and descending of the angels, highlighted that the Priest was both standing and active. The angels were a messenger administration. Again, in the book of Revelation, these messengers are shown to be people in Christ's church. The movement between the throne and the altar, highlights the active work of this administration in relation to all the other pieces of tabernacle furniture. In this regard, it was like the spinning wheels of the administration of the throne in heaven that the prophet Ezekiel witnessed. This pointed to the dynamic nature of the true tabernacle and priesthood, which the apostle John described as 'in' and 'around' the throne.

When God confirmed the Everlasting Covenant to Jacob as a statute, by showing him the temple and priesthood of God, He was also revealing to Jacob and his descendants the *conduct* of His house. Following this vision, Jacob set the stone up as a pillar. It seems that Paul was drawing on this imagery when he wrote to Timothy, so that he would know 'how one ought to *conduct* himself in the *household of God*, which is the church of the living God, *the pillar and support of the truth*'. We see that the foundation for the true temple was first revealed to Jacob.

References:

Isa 66:1
Rev 2:1
Rev 4:6

Rev 1:6, 15
Eze 1:16-21
Exo 19:6

Further Study: 1 Timothy 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 30

The tabernacle of Moses

Just as Adam and Eve ate of the elements of the Covenant of God through fellowship with Yahweh in the garden, the *Shekinah* was the point of fellowship with Yahweh and the place where the elements of the covenant were received by the nation of Israel in the time of Moses. The glory of God rested on the top of Mt Sinai and appeared like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain. The Lord God said to Moses, 'Come up to the Lord [Yahweh], you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel and you shall worship at a distance'. When they went up, they 'saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself ... they saw God, and they ate and drank.' Eating and drinking was the point of fellowship with God. From here, Moses entered the midst of the cloud and received the pattern of the tabernacle and law covenant.

The primary focus of this tabernacle was atonement for the sins of the people. However, it was foreshadowing the heavenly temple of the body of Christ. The Levitical priesthood of the temple on earth also pointed to a coming priesthood to which every believer would be joined. The *name of every covenant son of God* was symbolically inscribed on the twelve precious stones set in the breastplate of the high priest. The perfect law of God was given to the nation, and was a tutor to lead them to Christ so that they might be justified by faith. God had given the adoption as sons, the *Shekinah* of Yahweh, the covenants, the law, and the shadow tabernacle, to the nation of Israel. However, Israel was ultimately to be a *covenant people*, drawn from every tribe and nation.

References:

Exo 24:1, 10-11

Exo 28:17-21

Gal 3:23-24

Rom 9:4, 6-8

Further Study:

Exodus 29

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

The earthly Jerusalem - left desolate

As Jesus approached the *physical city of Jerusalem* in the lead-up to His crucifixion, He lamented, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. *Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!*' Jerusalem had become a city of considerable corruption. The temple, the cultural centrepiece of the city, had become a den of thieves on account of the commercial trading within its courts. When asked what authority He had to drive out those who were trading in the temple, Jesus replied, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'.

When Jesus carried His cross from the city to the place of His crucifixion, He was bringing an end to all offerings in the temple on earth and was leaving the house called 'Jerusalem' desolate. It was no longer the holy city. It was now likened to Sodom and Egypt. Offerings that were made in the earthly temple from that point on, were abominations to God. Jesus Christ, Immanuel, was replacing the earthly place of worship with the heavenly, and authoring a pathway for every person to be recovered to fellowship with God.

Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming of *Immanuel*, declaring that He would establish an administration of which there would be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. Isaiah was speaking of Jesus Christ and the administration that Paul described as suitable for the fullness of times. Every son of God is to be a part of this administration. Christ came to redeem every person who believes in Him, and to establish a *New Covenant* by which the sons of men can become the sons of God.

References:

Mat 23:37-38 Mar 11:17
Joh 2:19 Luk 23:25-26
Rev 11:8 Isa 66:3
Isa 9:6-7 Eph 1:10

Further Study: Jeremiah 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 2

The heavenly Jerusalem

The earthly Jerusalem is now *outside the camp of the heavenly Jerusalem* and is part of the wilderness of the whole world. The orientation of the temple is now *vertical*, in the sense that the throne of God is in heavenly places and the world is outside of the heavenly Jerusalem. It is important to note that we are speaking of a *spiritual dimension*. As mentioned earlier, when Jesus was praying in Gethsemane, He was in the most holy place of the true tabernacle. However, He was still on the earth. Likewise, we are still living on the earth, even though we have been raised with Christ to sit in heavenly places. After He died and rose again, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. The temple had been destroyed, and the true tabernacle had been established in three days. This is the temple of His body.

Although we were dead in trespasses and sins, and outside the camp of the heavenly Jerusalem, we are made alive together with Christ through baptism. We know that it is by grace that we are saved. In the first instance, this is the prevenient dimension of grace that enables us to hear the word of the covenant and receive faith to enter the place of fellowship with God. However, it also highlights that we now have access to the throne of grace in the true tabernacle. Paul explained that having been made alive together with Christ, our abode is in *the heavenly Jerusalem*. We have come to Mt Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem which is the city of the living God. It is the assembly of the church of the firstborn. It is the fellowship of His body.

References:

Mat 5:34 Joh 2:21
Heb 10:19-20 Col 2:12
Heb 12:2, 22

Further Study: Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3