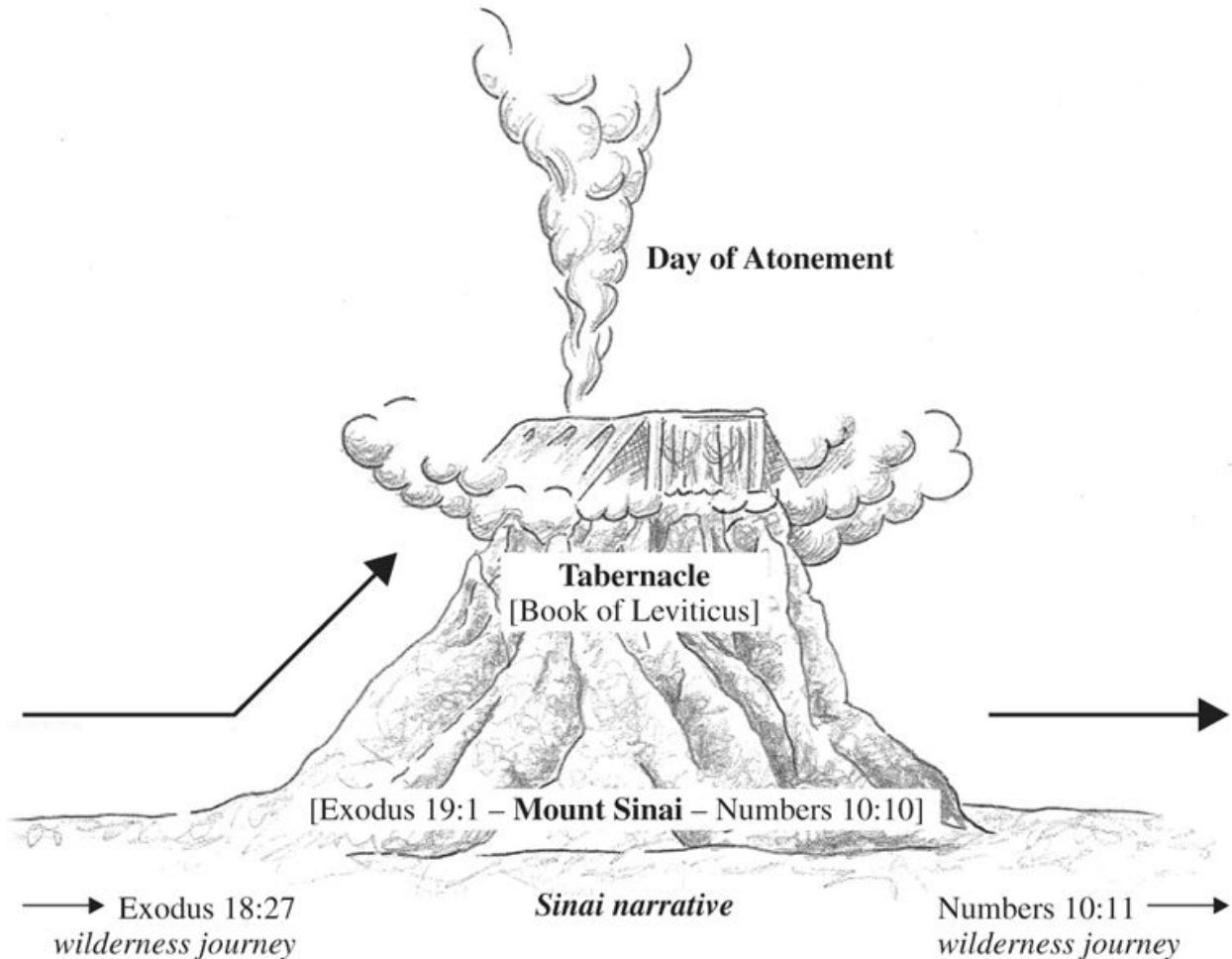


Sunday School: Pentateuch 2

Review



Summary:

Like moving inwardly along the rings of a target, this chapter (Morales “Who Shall Ascend”) has surveyed the structure of the Pentateuch concentrically, moving from its fivefold arrangement to the inner books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, then to the Sinai narrative (Exod 19 to Num 10), then to the central book of Leviticus, and, finally, to the innermost ring itself, the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16—the narrowest aim of the Pentateuch’s formation. The shape of the Pentateuch, I posit, follows (and forms) its unifying theme: YHWH’s opening a way for humanity to dwell in the divine Presence. The essence of that way and the heart of the Pentateuch’s theology is the Day of Atonement.

Main Lesson: Genesis

Utilizing the *tôlêdôt* formula of headings (built off *yld*, ‘to give birth’) often translated as ‘These are the generations of’, the book of Genesis may be structured along three major units, by which we will proceed: the opening prologue (Gen. 1:1–2:3), which stands outside the scheme of headings and serves as an introduction to the whole book; the primeval age (Gen. 2:4–11:26, containing five *tôlêdôt*); and the

patriarchal history (Gen. 11:27–50:26, also containing five tôlēdôt, with one duplicated in 36:9) (Wenham 2003: 18–19).

Gen 2.4-11.26	Gen 11.27-50
2.4 – Adam story	11.27 – Abraham story
5.1 – Genealogy	25.12 – Genealogy
6.9 – Flood story	25.19 – Jacob story
10.1 – Genealogy	36.1, 9 – Genealogy
11.10 – Nations story	37.2 – Joseph story

Toledoth serves several functions:

1. as section headings or “titles,” they signal that the following story will be about the progeny of the person mentioned—not the person himself. The genealogy of Terah (Gen 11.27), for example, is about Abraham;
2. as a “zoom lens” to narrow and focus the reader’s attention. Note the transition in Gen 2.4 from the transcendent creation account of Gen 1 to the more focused and intimate account of the garden in Gen 2-3; and
3. as a development of the “seed” theme, including God’s generational promises initiated with Gen 3.15 and as concentrated upon the royal line.
4. as a demonstration of the divine blessing to be fruitful and multiply (compare Gen 5.1ff with 1.27-28).

Prologue	Primeval Age	Patriarchal Age
Gen 1-2.3	Gen 2-11	Gen 12-50
		Abraham Cycle (12-25)
		Jacob Cycle (25-36)
		Joseph Story (37-50)

Genesis: Prologue

- I. God’s house: parallels between the cosmos and the tabernacle
 - A. In the ANE the analogy between cosmos and temple was commonplace. The cosmos was understood as a large temple and the temple as a small cosmos. Approaching the biblical account of creation, there are various indications that such a parallel between cosmos and temple (or tabernacle) is in view.
 1. For example, the Spirit or ‘Wind of God’ (rûah ’ēlōhîm) as a phrase appears in Genesis 1:2 for the construction of the cosmos and in Exodus 31:3 and 35:31 for the construction of the tabernacle.
 2. Moreover, the Spirit’s endowment of Bezalel, the chief artisan of the tabernacle, is described in terms of wisdom, understanding and knowledge (Exod. 31:3), the

same attributes by which God is said to have fashioned the cosmos:
(Prov.3:19–20)

3. Other creation terminology shared with the tabernacle includes the word *mā'ôr* (light, lamp) in Genesis 1:14–15, which always in the Pentateuch designates the lamps of the tabernacle. Vogels makes the same observation, adding, ‘The sun and moon are like sacred lamps in the sanctuary of the universe. A better translation would be: “Let there be lamps ...”, or “luminaries.” This word confirms the liturgical character of the narrative.
4. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, creation is likened to a tabernacle pitched by God (Ps. 104; Job 9:8; Isa. 40:22) or to a house God has established, with pillars, windows and doors (Job 26:11; Gen. 7:11; Ps. 78:23), the cosmos being thought of as a three-decked house of heavens, earth and sea.
5. Moreover, the completion of the tabernacle construction at the end of Exodus is described in terms that echo the completion of creation, using similar words and phrases:

<i>Exodus 39–40</i>	<i>Genesis 1–2</i>
And Moses saw all the work and, behold, they had done it (39:43)	And God saw all that he had made, and, behold it was very good (1:31)
Thus was completed all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting (39:32)	The heavens and the earth were completed and all their array (2:1)
When Moses had finished the work (40:33)	God finished the work which he had been doing (2:2)
Moses blessed them (39:43)	And God blessed (2:3)
to sanctify it and all its furnishings (40:9)	and sanctified it (2:3)

I. The Sabbath day: humanity’s chief end

- A. ‘ “Last in creation, first in intention,” the Sabbath is “the end of the creation of heaven and earth.” ’ This statement by Abraham Heschel, that the Sabbath is the *telos* or goal of creation, accurately captures the emphasis of Genesis 1:1–2:3 on the Sabbath, leading other scholars to refer to the creation account as a ‘cosmic liturgy of the seventh day’, and even as the ‘creation of the Sabbath’.

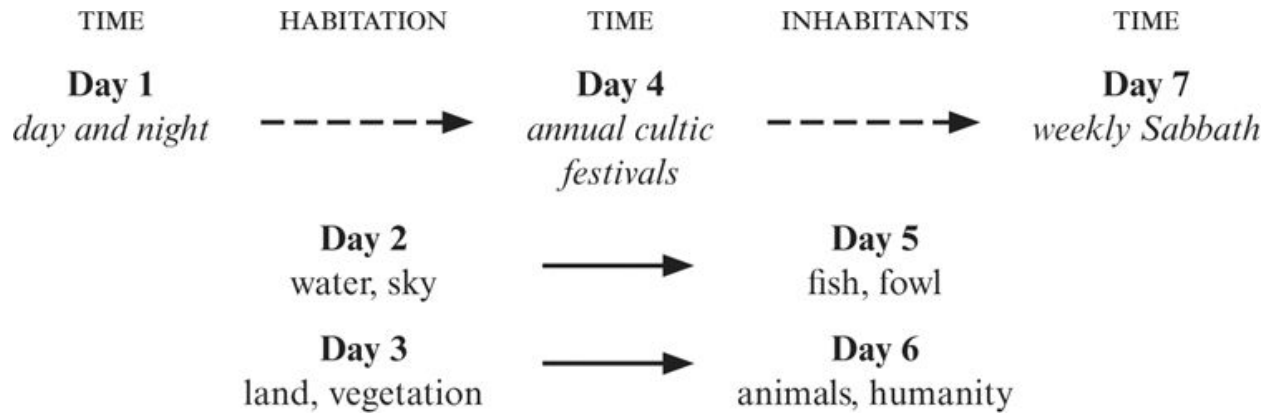
B. Emphasis on Sabbath

1. Indeed, beginning with a seven-word sentence,
2. developed through seven paragraphs,
3. and climaxing on the consecration of the Sabbath where the seventh day is given threefold emphasis, the role of the Sabbath is dominant, leaving its impress on the account in strong ways, as in the literary structure, and in more subtle ways, as in the number of times key words appear, being some derivative of seven.
 - a) God=35x
 - b) Earth=21x
 - c) Heaven=21x
 - d) God saw that it was good=7x

C. The most common outline of the creation account, using two triads of days to overcome formlessness and void respectively, highlights the uniqueness of the seventh day as the only day that is not paired:

<i>Formless → habitat</i>	<i>Void → inhabitants</i>
Day 1 light	Day 4 luminaries
Day 2 sky and water	Day 5 fish and fowl
Day 3 land, vegetation	Day 6 animals, humans
Day 7 The Sabbath	

Alternatively, one may also justly outline the creation narrative from the perspective of time, highlighting the first, central and last days as an approach to the divine Presence. Each of the six days concludes with a reference to time (‘there was evening, there was morning, day ...’), propelling the account steadily toward the goal of the seventh day. Day one establishes ‘evening and morning’ (the period of a day) through the creation and separation of light; day four establishes, as we will see, the calendric cycle for the annual cultic feasts; and day seven climaxes the whole account with the weekly Sabbath.



- I. Most people focus on the sixth day.
 - A. However, the climax is the seventh.
 - B. The sixth understood in light of seventh brings us to this statement. The Chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
 - C. “Until this wonder sets in deeply, that the Potter has crafted a vessel with whom he can interact and engage relationally, understanding the image of God will be limited to the goings on of the first six days. Humanity, nevertheless, is not the culmination of creation, but rather humanity in Sabbath day communion with God. This engagement with the divine is what—and what alone—can fulfil the purpose and potential for the image of God, not merely as keeper of the lower creation, but as lover of the fathomless Uncreated;” (L. Michael Morales, 47).