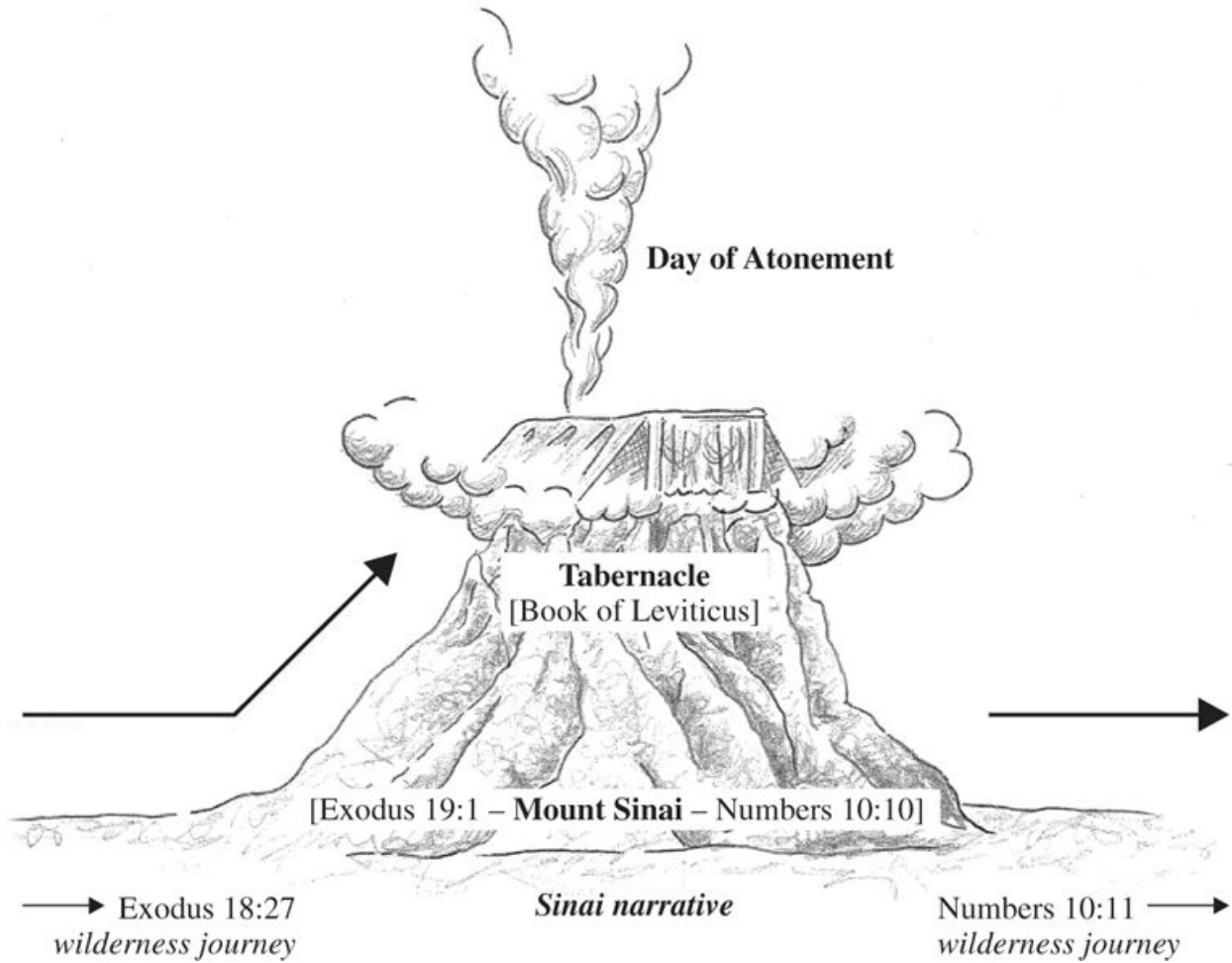


Sunday School: Pentateuch 3

Review:

The Focus of the Pentateuch



Main Structure of Genesis:

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)

Main Structure and Emphasis of Genesis Prologue:

<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	

God's rest both at the conclusion of creation in Genesis 1–2 and later in Israel's temple indicates not mere inactivity but that he had demonstrated his sovereignty over the forces of chaos (e.g., the enemies of Israel) and now has assumed a position of kingly rest further revealing his sovereign power.

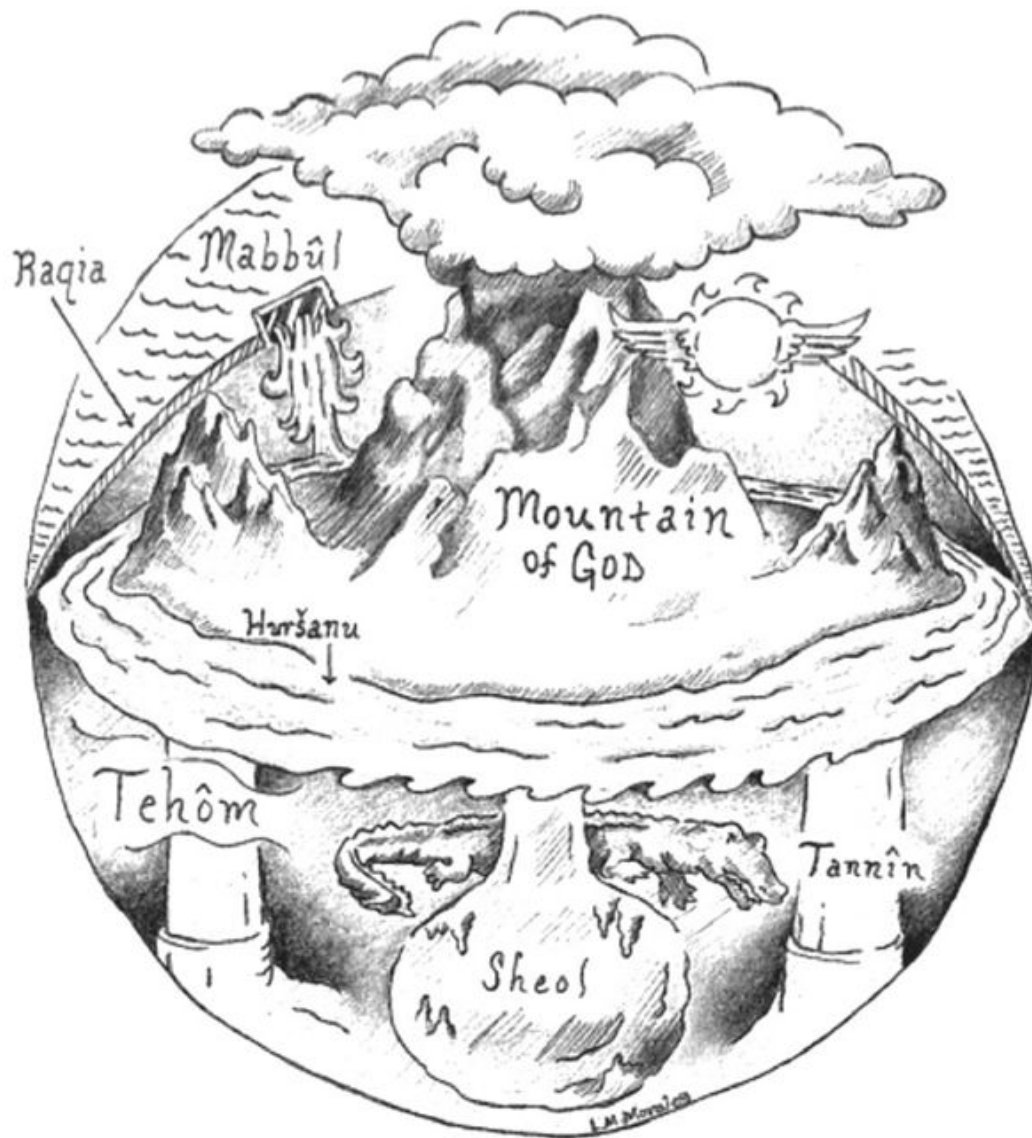
The image of 'resting' as connoting a position of sovereign reign is also conveyed by the description of Solomon's throne which had 'arms on each side of the seat, and two lions resting beside the arms', picturing sovereign guardianship. 1 Kings 10:18ff & **Psalm 47:8 & 22:1**



Main Lesson: Primeval Age¹
Genesis 2-11

Deepening exile from the presence of God: the Pentateuch's plot

- I. Broadly, Genesis moves from the life-giving Presence of God in Eden (Gen. 2–3) to the death and burial of Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 50:26)—that is, from the heights of Eden upon the mountain of God down to Sheol, the grave.



Cosmos

Genesis 3

¹ from Latin *primaevus* (from *primus* 'first' + *aevum* 'age')

- I. Upon their transgression, Adam and his wife hid from the Presence (pānîm, ‘face’) of YHWH God (3:8), and then, after experiencing both God’s judgment and grace, were driven out from his Presence in Eden: This primal exile is emphasized by the narrative in several ways.
 - A. First, there is a repetition of YHWH’s expulsion of Adam (vv. 23–24), along with an intensification of its description from ‘sent out’ to ‘drove out’.
 - B. Then, having driven him out, YHWH God bars Eden’s entrance in a twofold manner, stationing the cherubim (fierce, quasidivine guardians) and the flaming, whirling sword.
 - C. Finally, the nature of the exile as death is manifest by the divine purpose, narrated climactically with barred life (haḥayyîm) as the final word in the sentence: ‘to guard the way to the tree of life’.
- II. This expulsion from the divine Presence is the central tragic event that drives the history of redemption, determining and shaping the ensuing biblical narrative. Indeed, all of the drama of Scripture is found in relation to this singular point of focus: YHWH’s opening up the way for humanity to dwell in his Presence once more.

Genesis 4

- I. After Adam and Eve have been expelled from the garden of Eden, it appears they did not stray from the bounds of Eden itself—Eden being broader than the garden within it. Though the lines are subtle and sparse, a definite landscape surfaces through the sketch: no longer able to abide in the divine Presence within the garden (holy of holies), humanity now meets with God at the gate of Eden’s garden, which has become the cultic² site for sacrifice and worship.
 - A. Cherubim and other like creatures were the traditional guardians of sacred space in the ANE.
 1. The veil of the tabernacle’s holy of holies was embroidered with cherubim (Exod. 26:1, 31),
 2. and cherubim were also fashioned upon the atonement lid of the ark (Exod. 25:18–22).
 3. Later, the inner sanctuary of Solomon’s temple too would be guarded by large cherubim statues (1 Kgs 6:23–28).
 4. As explained in Leviticus, the tabernacle’s eastward door served as the place where Israelites would come to present their offerings before the Presence of YHWH:
 - a) ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: “When ’ādām [any man] brings near an offering to YHWH ... he shall offer it at the door/entrance [petah] of the tent of meeting that it may be accepted before YHWH.” ’ (Lev. 1:3; cf. Exod. 40:29; Lev. 4:7)
 - B. Conceivably, then, it was to the original sanctuary door, the gate of Eden guarded by cherubim, that Cain and Abel would have brought their offerings.
 1. Genesis 4:7-translations
 2. See Article:
- II. The story resolves with Cain’s deepened exile in relation to the divine Presence within Eden:

² Early 17th century (originally denoting homage paid to a divinity): from French culte or Latin cultus ‘worship’,

- A. (Gen. 4:16).
- B. This should certainly be considered a second expulsion, for,
 - 1. aside from various other parallels with Genesis 3, Cain is also ‘driven out’ (gēraštā),
 - 2. and plainly understands the departure from the countenance of God as certain death, contesting, ‘I shall be hidden from your face ... anyone who finds me will kill me’ (Gen. 4:14).

The waters of chaos

- I. (Gen. 6:1–7)
 - A. Humanity’s alienation from God deepens further still when the sons of God take to themselves the daughters of men, bearing mighty heroes of ‘name’ (ʿanšê haššēm), and YHWH resolves to wipe out ‘man’ (hāʾādām) from the face of the ‘ground’ (hāʾādāmâ) by a deluge of waters—
 - B. A third divine expulsion.
 - C. Genesis 6:12-
 - 1. The only previous use of this word ‘way’ (derek) was when YHWH had installed the cherubim and flaming sword to guard ‘the way to the tree of life’ (Gen. 3:24)
 - 2. Unfortunately, various English versions erroneously translate the masculine singular pronominal suffix (‘his way’) as plural (‘their way’), obscuring the theology. Aside from the grammatical concerns, the parallel occasion in Exod. 32 bolsters the correct translation as ‘his way’. Upon the golden calf idolatry, YHWH declares to Moses that Israel has acted ‘corruptly’ (šihēt), by turning aside quickly from ‘the way which I commanded them’ (vv. 7–8). The parallels with the deluge continue in v. 10 as YHWH says he will destroy the Israelites and begin anew with Moses as he once destroyed humanity, beginning anew with Noah (Morales).

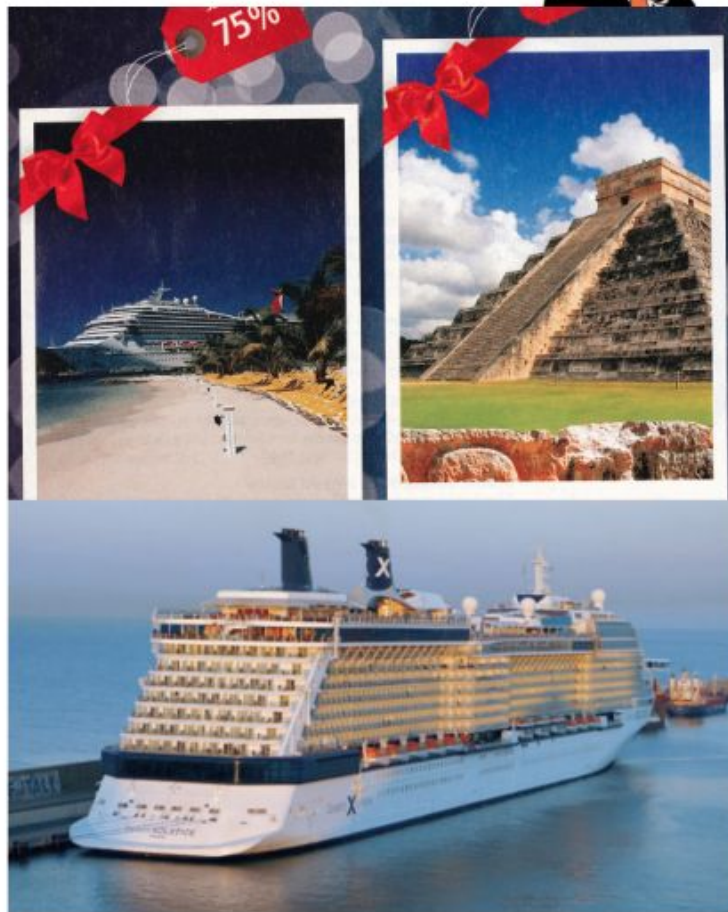
Ararat, mountain of God at the new beginning

- I. Now it is of particular interest to us that the one man whose household is delivered from the waters of death happens to be described with the very attributes that would qualify him to ascend into the Presence of YHWH.
 - A. Noah, we are told, was a ‘righteous’ (šaddîq) man, ‘blameless’ (tāmîm) in his generations (Gen. 6:9). These qualifications become the answer to the gate liturgy question in Psalm 15:1-2
 - B. Relatedly, entrance into the ark is conditional, and the narrative is careful to describe Noah as one qualified to enter, (Gen. 7:1) (Morales).
- II. While popular depictions of the ark often portray it as a boat, this vessel, having no sails, rudder, and so on, was not a ship. Perhaps the oddest feature of the ark—and yet the central focus of the narrative—is the doorway (petaḥ) on its side.
 - A. the only buildings described in the Pentateuch, each one the climactic point of history before and after the flood respectively.

- B. A further correspondence between the ark and the tabernacle is that the plans and measurements for each were revealed by God.
- C. The ark, moreover, is presented as a cosmos in miniature, to serve as a substitute refuge while the cosmos itself is being cleansed of its uncleanness. ‘Lower, second and third decks you shall make,’ YHWH commands, reflecting the three-decked world of ANE cosmography.
- D. Even as the world was made (habitat) and then filled (inhabitants), so the three-storey ark is made and then filled with living creatures—and Noah, a new Adam, abides with them in peace.
- E. The ark comes to ‘rest’ (nûah) on the highest Ararat mount—the same verb describing God’s ‘resting’ Adam within the garden (2:15).—Morales

A floating ziggurat...impossible?

Hmmm.....



III. Noahic Covenant not to destroy

A. Rainbow=firmament keeping rain from cleansing earth again.

1. Also, a number of scholars say this is a separation of heaven and earth (Ezekiel 1:22-23).
2. God removes himself and man is thus alienated but removed from God's wrath.



As the priestly figure able to ascend the mountain of YHWH, moreover, Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence—*homo liturgicus*. As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal holy of holies. A new beginning for the new creation is possible only via Noah's sacrifice. Noah is thus a prototypical mediator, the priest whose obedience quelled the wrath of God. The righteous priest and his burnt offering, moreover, "are prototypes of Israel's priests and their sacrifices (cf. Job 1.5; 42.8)."²² Once more, then, the narrative catechizes Israel regarding the logic of the tabernacle/temple cultus.

Ziggurat of Babylon, city of man as mountain of God

- I. In the tower of Babylon episode, humanity, gathered to the east (miqqedem)—presumably east of the Ararat mount/ark—attempts to build a ziggurat 'whose summit is in the heavens' (11:4).
[Architectural mountain of God]
- II. Let's observe the chiasmic structure and find the center.



- A. Given the previous suggestion that the bow may serve as something of a boundary marker, such a breach into the heavens would have been especially defiant and in accord with previous divine—human barrier transgressions throughout the primeval age.
 1. On this scenario the bow would function somewhat like the pillar and heap of stones in the covenant between Laban and Jacob, serving as a witness ‘that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm’ (Gen. 31:52).
 - B. Isaiah 14:13-15
 - C. Thus the irony of the name ‘Babylon’—for the Babylonians it meant the gate of heaven, literally ‘the gate of god’ (bab-ili), while for YHWH and his people it is a pun on the word for ‘confusion’
- III. This story is characterized on the human side by an increase in sin to avalanche proportions. The sins of Adam and Eve, Cain, Lamech, the angel marriages, the Tower of Babel—these are stages along that way which has separated man farther and farther from God. This succession of narratives, therefore, points out a continually widening chasm between man and God. But God reacts to these outbreaks of human sin with severe judgments. The punishment of Adam and Eve was severe; severer still was Cain’s. Then followed the Flood, and the final judgment was the Dispersion, the dissolution of mankind’s unity. Thus at the end of the primeval history a difficult question is raised: God’s future relationship to his rebellious humanity, which is now scattered in fragments. (Von Rad)
- IV. Especially in the light of ANE parallels where, for example, the deluge was due to the capriciousness of the gods (with minimal human culpability), the biblical account of the primeval

age develops a solid theology of sin, assessing human nature with a devastating pessimism.⁷³ That 'way which has separated man farther and farther from God' must, therefore, be countered by a new way that leads back to God, a way that overcomes sin and enables humanity to draw near to him. The theology of sin thus becomes a backdrop for a theology of sacrifice, as the consuming flames of the altar shine into the all-engulfing darkness of human depravity. Finding fuller expression in the book of Leviticus, the way of YHWH already begins to open as Noah's altar accomplishes what the deluge of waters could not, quelling the wrath of God. Although the root of humanity's heart remains evil, the soothing aroma of the ascent offerings pacifies YHWH's own heart, abating his curse and releasing his blessing (Gen. 8:20–9:1; 6:5). (L. Michael Morales)