

Session Four

GOD'S PURPOSE AND CALLING FOR MAN

In the previous session, we discussed the importance of 'context' in understanding scripture and the Bible's story.

Genesis, the Book of Beginnings has a very important context:

- Moses was the writer, and his audience was the Children of Israel
- The purpose of his writing to them, was to prepare them to live a life on mission with God, to begin to outwork the 'covenant of blessing' to the nations of the world (Ge 12:2-3)¹.

All five books that Moses wrote could be considered a divinely inspired curriculum of God's School of Mission for the Children of Israel.



The Book of Genesis, being the Book of Beginnings, offers foundational teaching that sets the correct trajectory for understanding all of scripture. The first two chapters of Genesis are when everything is perfect, before the chaos produced by the 'fall'. They provide a foundational understanding of God's original plan.

Last session we looked at two foundational lessons from God's School of Mission:

- For Israel to understand who Yahweh was.
- That God had called them to work, not **for** Him, but **with** Him. They had been called to enter His **rest** and partner with Him in governing and ordering His creation from infancy to the full flourishing for the glory of God.

In this session, we will examine more closely God's purpose for man in His creation, as described by Moses. This important teaching is part of the curriculum of God's School of Mission. It is designed to help prepare the Children of Israel to connect with their covenant God (Yahweh) and to live fruitful lives on mission with Him.

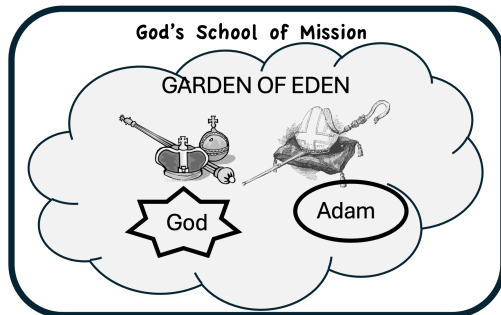
A. God's Purpose for Man: King and Priest

Moses teaches that Man was made in God's likeness and image to exercise dominion over all created things (Ge 1:26).²

¹ Genesis 12:2-3 *I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

² Ge 1:26 *Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

Moses followed up with the story of the Garden of Eden. Through this story, the Children of Israel would have understood that Man was not only to be a king, but also a priest.



Moses was describing the Garden of Eden as sacred space due to God being in the Garden. In ancient times, sacred space was always seen as a temple, and by placing Man in this sacred space Man became sacred to God and a priest serving in God's temple.

B. The Kingly and Priestly Calling: Past, Present, Future

Moses was describing Man, or Adam, as being created by God, in His likeness and image, to be a king and a priest to represent the invisible God and His spiritual kingdom in His visible and physical world.

In God's School of Mission, the Children of Israel were beginning to understand the significance of their calling. When Moses later referred to them as "kingdom of priests" they would have understood what he was referring to.

... a **royal priesthood** (1 Pe 2:9).

*Jesus (through His death and resurrection) has made us to be a **kingdom** and **priests** to serve our God and we shall reign on the earth (Rev 5:10).*

*He has made us **kings** and **priests** unto God (Rev 1:6 KJV).*

Conclusion

We take a massive leap from the introduction to the Bible's story in Genesis 1 and 2 to the story's conclusion in Revelation 21 and 22, to see how it all works out in the end.

*The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city ... and His servants will **serve** Him. They will see His Face and His Name will be on their foreheads. And they will **reign** forever and ever (Rev 22:3-5).*

So, we have God's people confirmed as kings and priests in God's new heaven and new earth and for all eternity.