

Lesson 1

A Reading from the Book of Moses called Genesis.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over it.”

God planted a Garden in Eden and placed man in it, to tend and keep it.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. *The Serpent* said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “...God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree *of the knowledge of good and evil*, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So the woman ... took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened...

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” *God* said, “...Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.” The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all cattle,
and above all wild animals;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
**he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”**

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson II

A Reading for the Prophet Jeremiah

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson III

A Reading from Zechariah

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD. ¹¹ And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. ¹² And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”

¹³ Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson IV

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Again the LORD spoke to *King* Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” And *the Prophet of the Lord* said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman’u-el.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson V

A Lesson from the Prophet Micah

You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are *too* little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in travail has brought forth *her Son*;
then the rest of his brethren shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.
And this shall be peace...

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson VI

A Lesson from the Evangelist St. Matthew

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman’u-el” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lesson VII

The Continuation of the Gospel According to St. Luke

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will toward men..."

This is the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...