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TEN KEYS FOR
UNLOCKING THE BIBLE

*Treasures That Will
Change Your Life*

Colin S. Smith

Moody Publishers
Chicago

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CHAPTER 1 — GENESIS 2 & 3

The
GARDEN



— DISCOVER —

who you are and why your life matters to God.

— LEARN —

why this world is not as God made it.

— WORSHIP —

because Jesus has opened the way back into God's blessing.

THE first thing Adam knew, he was staring into the face of God.

God had formed his body from the dust of the ground, but it lay there lifeless, like a corpse until God breathed into it. Then Adam became a living being (Genesis 2:7), and in his first moment of conscious existence, he knew that his life had come from God.

God is invisible, but right from the beginning of the Bible story, He has been reaching out to make Himself known. That's why He made Himself visible to Adam. We call this a "theophany," an appearance of God in visible form. It was God's way of creating a relationship.

God introduces Himself as our Creator and therefore our owner. He made you in His image (1:26), and you are of unique value to Him. God chose to bring you into being. He did that on purpose, and you will discover that purpose as you get to know the One who created you.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The Bible tells us that “the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden” (2:8, 15).

We cannot be certain about the garden’s location, but it is important to grasp that it was a real place. It was located near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (2:10–14), which run through modern Iraq.

God prepared a place for Adam, and God put him there. He does the same thing for us. The Bible says that God has determined the exact places for all of us to live (Acts 17:26).

The place where God puts you will not be perfect. Even Eden was exposed to the possibility of evil. But there is no better place to be than where God has set you down. You are not where you are by accident but by the plan and the purpose of God.

God gave Adam the responsibility of naming the animals and caring for the garden (2:19). Work is a good gift from God, and God took pleasure in what Adam was doing. It may be hard for you to imagine that God would enjoy the

documents you prepare, the components you assemble, or the home you create . . . but He does.

A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

The LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (2:22; EMPHASIS ADDED)

I'd love to have seen the expression on Adam's face! God appeared to Adam and said, "Adam, I have someone I want you to meet!" I have no doubt that Adam's jaw dropped wide open. He certainly seemed pretty pleased! He said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (2:23).

God brought them together. Try to picture that in your mind. The LORD God takes her hand and puts it into his hand and says, "Here is the partner I have made for you!"

When two people marry, God does in an invisible way what He did for Adam and Eve in the garden. If you are married, try to picture God taking your hand and the hand of your spouse and joining them together. When you know God has joined you together, it will help you weather the most difficult times.

A LOVING COMMAND

God came into the Garden of Eden as a visitor, making Himself known and cultivating a relationship with the man and the woman. He did not impose Himself on them but gave them the opportunity of choosing a relationship of faith and obedience with Him.

God gave Adam a single command that was, like all His commandments, a wonderful expression of His love. “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:17).

God had made everything good, and so “good” was the only thing that Adam knew. The purpose of God’s command was to keep him from evil.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

The Bible does not give us a full explanation of the origin of evil, but it does tell us where it started. Alongside the visible world that we know, God made an invisible creation in heaven and filled it with angels.

The devil was one of these angels. He became inflated with pride and tried to usurp the position of God (see Isaiah

14:12–14). His rebellion was unsuccessful and led to his being excluded from the presence of God and cast down to the earth. So right from the beginning of human history, there was an enemy bent on destroying the work of God. His first aim was to introduce the man and the woman to the knowledge of evil.

RECRUITING FOR THE REBELLION

Satan came into the garden with the aim of recruiting the human race into his rebellion against God. Spirits are invisible to us, and so when Satan wanted to communicate with the first man and woman, he came in the form of an alluring serpent. He presented himself as a friend and began to question the single commandment God had given.

“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). If Satan could create confusion in Eve’s mind about what God had said, he would be well on the way to gaining power over her.

Then Satan suggested that God had exaggerated the consequences of sin. “You will not surely die” (v. 4). In effect, he said, “How could you possibly believe that a single act of disobedience would lead to something as drastic as death?”

But his third suggestion was the one that tipped the scales for Eve, and her husband. “God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,” he said (v. 5).

Adam and Eve decided that they wanted this knowledge of evil. They disobeyed God’s single command and they got what they wanted. We have all lived with it ever since.

HOPE IN A CURSE!

*The LORD God said to the serpent, . . .
“Cursed are you.” (3:14)*

When a person or thing is “cursed,” it is consigned to destruction. So when God cursed the serpent, He was announcing that evil would not stand. When God spoke about a Deliverer who would crush the serpent’s head, Adam and Eve must have been overjoyed (v. 15).

A CURSE DEFLECTED

To Adam he said, . . . “Cursed . . .” (3:17)

Adam must have held his breath. God had cursed the serpent, and now He was looking straight at Adam as He spoke that ominous word again.

Adam must have thought that he would be utterly destroyed, but he was in for a surprise. Instead of saying to Adam, “Cursed are you,” as the LORD did to the serpent, God said, “Cursed is the ground because of you” (3:17).

God deflected the curse away from Adam so that it fell on the ground and not on him directly. God kept His judgment away from Adam, creating room for future reconciliation. On the day he sinned, Adam discovered the grace and mercy of God. The curse that should have been on him went to another place.

OUT OF EDEN

Our first parents were banished from Eden (3:23), where they had known the blessing and presence of God. Life became a struggle in a hostile place, where they were exposed to all kinds of danger from wild animals.

Over time, they would notice lines and wrinkles in their skin. They would experience pain and discover that the “death” God had spoken about was a terrible reality that they could not avoid.

God placed cherubim—angels representing His judgment and holiness—at the entrance to the garden, along with a

flaming sword flashing back and forth, barring the way to the Tree of Life. It must have been a terrifying sight.

THE SHATTERED SWORD

Try to imagine yourself standing with Adam and Eve outside Eden, looking back at the angels and the flashing sword of judgment. There's no way back for you into the presence of God. If you tried, the sword would cut you down.

But as you look, someone comes out from the presence of God and stands beside you. Then He turns and advances toward the flaming sword. You cringe as you look. The sword is flashing back and forth, and you can see what will happen to Him when He gets there. But He keeps walking forward, steadily, and relentlessly.

The sword strikes Him . . . and kills Him. It breaks His body, but in breaking His body, the sword itself is broken. The sword that killed Him lies shattered on the ground. By His death, the way back to the presence and blessing of God is opened.

That's what happened when Jesus died. The judgment that keeps us out of God's presence struck Him. It was spent and

exhausted on Him. The sword of God's judgment broke itself on Him, and so the way back into God's blessing is wide open for all who will come.



Pause for Prayer

Almighty God,

I acknowledge You are my Creator and owner. I thank You that You have made me in Your image. I want to come to know You better.

I recognize that You are the only One who can deliver from the power of evil. I see that the world needs to be delivered from evil, and I acknowledge that I need to be delivered from its power in my own life, too.

Thank You that Jesus Christ has come into the world so that evil will not stand. Thank You that, by His death, He opened the way back into Your blessing and into Your presence for all who will come. May I be one of these people.

In Jesus' name, amen.



Questions for Discussion

1. What have you inherited from your parents for which you are thankful?
2. What difference does it make if you were created by God or are a product of evolutionary forces? What are the implications of each?
3. Can you remember a situation where you felt guilty and genuinely were? How did you deal with your feelings of guilt?
4. God desires each of us to regain the life our first parents enjoyed in the garden. What would have to happen to make that possible?

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

GOD continued to give good gifts to our first parents, but outside of Eden, their struggle with evil intensified. When Eve held her first son, Cain, she must have hoped that he would be the deliverer God had promised. But he killed his brother and became the world's first murderer. As the generations advanced, evil multiplied and people knew little about the living God.

But God would not abandon the human race. He appeared to a man called Abraham, promising to bless him and, through him, people from every nation on earth (Genesis 12:1–3). From that point on, the Bible follows the story of Abraham's descendants.

At the height of a famine in Canaan, Abraham's grandson Jacob moved with his family to Egypt. The migration saved their lives, and over the next four hundred years, the people God had promised to bless grew from a large family to a nation of almost two million people.

As they grew in number, the Hebrews were oppressed and became slaves. God raised up Moses and, despite the determined resistance of Pharaoh, delivered them from Egypt. God brought them into the desert at Sinai and made a covenant with them. They would be His people and the Lord would be their God. Then God gave them the Law . . .

TEN KEYS FOR
UNLOCKING THE BIBLE
COURSE
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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MOODY PUBLISHERS
Chicago

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Key Number One

THE GARDEN



SETTING THE SCENE

OUR aim in these ten studies is to explain what the Bible teaches. Of course, we would like you to believe the Bible, but before you can make that decision, you need to know what it says.

Coming to a *Ten Keys* study is like being invited into a house and shown around its rooms. We want you to experience the world of the Bible and to see how it all connects together.

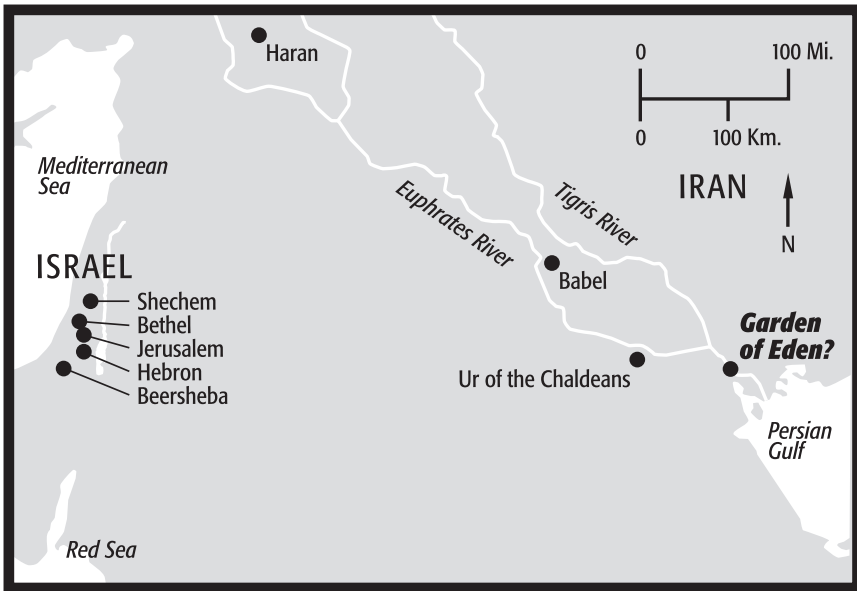
You won't be told what to believe, but you will discover what the Bible teaches, and you will learn about the living God who introduces Himself through the Scriptures.

We begin our study in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Genesis literally means "beginnings." And in the book of Genesis we discover the beginnings of the universe, animals, the human race, marriage, the family, nations, governments, music, agriculture, cities, and languages.


We don't know exactly *when* these events took place, but the Bible does give us a hint as to *where* they occurred. The Garden of Eden was near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (Genesis 2:14). These rivers may have altered their course, but assuming that they are the same as those in the days of Adam and Eve, the original Garden of Eden was somewhere in the vicinity of modern-day Iraq.

The events that took place in the Garden of Eden are our first key for unlocking the Bible.

POSSIBLE LOCATION OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN



KEY NUMBER ONE: THE GARDEN

DATES	EVENTS	BOOKS OF THE BIBLE	WORLD HISTORY
	Creation	<i>Genesis</i>	
	The Flood		Construction of pyramids begins in Egypt (2650 B.C.)
2000 B.C.	Abraham	<i>Job</i> <i>Genesis</i>	Metalworkers create bronze, ushering in Bronze Age
	Isaac		
	Jacob		
	Four Hundred Years of Slavery in Egypt	<i>Exodus</i>	
1500 B.C.	Exodus from Egypt (Moses)	<i>Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy</i>	Egyptians begin using parchment for writing
	Entrance into Canaan (Joshua)	<i>Joshua</i>	
	Three Hundred Years of Chaos (the Judges)	<i>Judges</i> <i>Ruth</i>	
1000 B.C.	King Saul King David King Solomon	<i>1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)</i>	King Tut buried with fabulous treasures in Egypt
	Divided Kingdom (930 B.C.)	<i>Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Minor Prophets</i>	
500 B.C.	Fall of Jerusalem and exile		Aesop becomes famous for his fables
	Rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra, Nehemiah)	<i>Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther</i>	Plato born in Greece
4 B.C.	Birth of Christ		Great Wall of China completed

FOLLOWING ALONG

INTRODUCTION:

The whole Bible is one story that points to Jesus Christ.

I. God Is the Creator.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

- A. The Creator is the owner.
- B. Being created gives your life meaning and purpose.
- C. Being created in God's image gives you unique value.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26)

II. God Gives Good Gifts.

- A. God gives His presence.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. (Genesis 3:8)

- B. God gives a place. (See the map on page 10.)

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. (Genesis 2:8)

- C. God gives a purpose.

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (Genesis 2:19)

D. God gives a partner.

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." . . . The LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Genesis 2:18, 22)

III. Human Beings Have Become Alienated from God.

A. God gave one command.

*"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."
(Genesis 2:17)*

B. The first man and woman chose the knowledge of evil, and evil became a power in human nature.

C. The two were excluded from God's presence.

*So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden.
(Genesis 3:23)*

IV. God Has Made the Way Back.

A. God consigned the enemy to destruction.

God said to the serpent, ". . . Cursed are you." (Genesis 3:14)

B. In God's mercy, Adam's curse was deflected.

"Cursed is the ground because of you." (Genesis 3:17)

C. Jesus came to become a curse for us.

Christ redeemed us . . . by becoming a curse for us. (Galatians 3:13)

DISCUSSING TOGETHER

1. What have you inherited from your parents for which you are thankful?

2. What difference does it make whether you were created by God or are an accident of history? What are the implications of each?

3. How do you explain the great pain, suffering, and strife that we see in our world today?

4. How have you seen God's hand in providing a place, a purpose, or a partner for you?

5. Would you like a greater sense of God's presence in your life? Why or why not?

Building the Story

THE GARDEN:

God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they chose to disobey Him, gained the knowledge of evil, and were evicted from Paradise.

Looking Ahead

If you would like to prepare in advance for session two, read the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20. As you read, consider why God might have given these particular commandments to His people.

TEN KEYS FOR
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COURSE

LEADERS' GUIDE

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SESSION-BY-SESSION GUIDANCE FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

Session One

Since this is your first session together, take time to get to know each other before the message. Begin by asking everyone to share some basic information about themselves—where they live, what they do for a living, etc. Add a more informal question such as, “What do you like to do to relax?” or, “Where is your favorite vacation spot?” Then ask group members to share what they would like to get out of the study. This will give you a sense of people’s expectations and needs and how you can tailor the course to meet their expectations.

Take a few minutes to explain the format for the evening, reminding the group that they will have an opportunity for discussion. Then read the short “Setting the Scene” section from the study guide and show the video. It is helpful to tell the group that the video runs for twenty-five minutes. If you have chosen to present the teaching material yourself, keep your presentation within this time frame.

Use the questions in the study guide for your discussion, but don’t feel pressured to cover all of them. The goal is to have a lively discussion. Keep the discussion to the time you have stated. It is better to leave people wanting more than to extend the discussion until people tire of it.

After closing your time together, you can invite people to stay for more informal discussion.

End each discussion by reading the “Building the Story” point. This will reinforce the story line of the Bible. Remind the group that advance preparation is not necessary for this study but that the “Looking Ahead” section gives some direction if they would like to use it.

The *Ten Keys* study makes no attempt to defend the Bible or to demonstrate that it is true. The purpose of the study is allow the Bible to speak for itself. You may want to tell your group that the aim is not to discuss whether we can believe the Bible but to discover what it says.

Some people will have questions during session one about the truth of the Bible and Creation; during later sessions they may question evidence for the Resurrection and so forth. It is usually best to avoid making these questions the focus of discussion, but it is important to provide an answer. The *Ten Keys* web site (www.tenkeys.info) includes a range of helpful resources for answering these questions.

Session Two

Nearly everyone has heard of the Ten Commandments, but many have not thought very deeply about why these commands were given or what role they play in the Christian life.

The goal of this session is to see that God's commandments are a reflection of His own character and that they reveal our need of Jesus Christ. This can be a tough pill for us to swallow, but it is essential for understanding our need of God's grace and forgiveness.

Some members of your group may feel that they measure up pretty well to the Ten Commandments. Jesus once spoke with a man who felt this way and asked him a question that revealed his fundamental selfishness (Matthew 19:16–22). You may find it helpful to refer to this story and to the portion of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus explains that the Law searches our attitudes as well as our actions (Matthew 5:21–30).

Questions three and four give good opportunity to probe the difficulty of keeping the commandments. As the group begins to think more deeply about the commandments, you will find that they will have a greater appreciation of how difficult they really are.

Your discussion here is important because it will help your group to understand why we need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to grow in fulfilling the law of God.

Question six moves the discussion onto our hope in Jesus Christ. No Christian ever fulfills God's Law perfectly in this life, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to move in that direction and to keep growing in all that it means to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

It will be important to end this discussion on the positive note of the life that is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Session Three

The Day of Atonement is a powerful visual presentation, explaining why Jesus Christ had to die and how His death can take away our sins. This will likely be a new insight for many.

Before viewing the video, walk through the “Setting the Scene” section carefully, pausing to see if anyone has questions. Also, review the layout of the tabernacle together.

In your discussion, pay special attention to question two. You may want to walk through the five acts in the drama of the Day of Atonement and let different members discuss how they would have felt as they watched these events.

Question four may open up some widely different ideas about the appropriate way of confessing our sins. The key point to emphasize is that our sins are to be confessed to God, and that if we have offended another person, we should also confess a specific sin to that person. While it may not be possible to name all our sins, it is important to be specific in identifying and confessing particular sins and asking the forgiveness of God.

The moment when the high priest prayed, confessing the sins of the people, was especially important. If your group can grasp the concept of guilt

being transferred, they will be very close to understanding why Jesus had to die, and what it means for Him to bear our sins.

The Old Testament builds a framework for understanding Christ and His mission. One participant in the *Ten Keys* study found that the connection between the Day of Atonement and Christ's death on the cross became so clear to him that he could not imagine how Jewish people today could miss it. This demonstrates the important role of the Old Testament in helping us to understand the work of Christ. This man put his faith in Christ a few weeks later.

At the end of the discussion, read the short "Building the Story" statement, and end the session with prayer. Since this is your third week together, you may like to ask if group members have any prayer requests. Lead in prayer for these yourself, making sure that you cover each one.

Session Four

This session ends with an opportunity to respond to what we have learned so far by trusting Christ as Savior. The video points out the differences among “looking,” “trying,” “knowing,” and “buying,” and includes a prayer for those who would like to receive what Christ offers. Some may be ready to make this commitment. Others will not, and it is important that nobody should feel pressured.

You might want to give people an opportunity to respond by simply saying, “What did you think?” This may lead to a fruitful discussion. If participants do not respond to that, you can simply dive into the questions.

Question five is especially important in this discussion. Many people believe that our good works play some part in our salvation. This question offers a good opportunity to open up that issue by showing that we cannot offer anything to God, and that salvation is about receiving what He offers to us.

You will notice that question six is labeled “for personal reflection,” so it is important that nobody feels forced to share his or her response. You may consider asking someone who has come to know Christ as his Savior

to share how he came to the place of “buying” in his own life. Make sure you ask the person in advance so he or she is not put on the spot.

If you are using *Ten Keys* in a large group format, encourage those who made a decision to follow Christ to share this with others in their group. One way of doing this is to have a response card at the table every week that participants would use to inform you if they are coming back the next week. You can encourage them to use this same card to also communicate suggestions, questions, or commitments of faith.

The outline in the workbook ends with a prayer that someone can use to receive what Christ offers. Remind the group that we can express our desire to “buy” through prayer. Tell them this prayer is a sample of the kind of prayer they could pray to express their response to God’s invitation.

Session Five

Session five introduces us directly to Jesus Christ, showing that He is God, He is man, and He is holy. These truths are foundational for understanding how Jesus can bear the sin of the world and reconcile humanity to God.

Questions four, five, and six address these central issues. If Jesus was not God, He would not be in a position to reconcile us to God. Christ's love for us is God's love for us, because Jesus the Son is one with God the Father.

Remember that the aim of the *Ten Keys* study is to explain what the Bible says. It is important to emphasize that nobody can fully understand how Jesus can be both God and man. Yet this is what the Bible reveals to us about Him.

If Jesus was not man, He would not have been able to stand in our place and bear the punishment for sin on our behalf. The animals sacrificed in the Old Testament could never take away sin. All they could do was illustrate the principle that a life had to be laid down. But it had to be a human life that was laid down for the sin of humanity.

The holiness of Jesus is our third learning point in this session. If Jesus had any sins of His own, He would not have been able to bear the sins of others. So the holiness of Jesus is of great importance. He is unlike any other person who has ever lived. He alone is God, man, and holy, and so He is uniquely qualified to take away the sins of the world.

Question seven is offered for personal reflection. Depending on the dynamics of your group and your experience last time, you could give participants an opportunity to share their answers if they feel comfortable.