

GENESIS 2:4-25

THE CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN

The Bible tells the story of God. It reveals who God is and what He does. In the Bible we learn about God's character. So tell me, in these last 4 weeks looking at the creation account what did you learn about God?

We're told in Genesis 1:26-27 that on Day Six of creation God made MAN in the image of God. Man without a definite article in front of it refers to both men and women. "Male and female He created them," both in the image of God. So, in Genesis Chapter 1 God creates both man and woman then in Genesis Chapter 2 we're given a detailed explanation of that creation.

The idea of being made in the image of God is repeated several times so it must be important. Last week we talked about what being made in God's image means. We said that there is a spiritual component to us human beings. We have a personal connection to, an identity with, God that the animals do not have. We have self-consciousness. We can reason. We can think abstractly. Our language skills allow us to communicate ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions, etc. We have the capacity for personal relationships with each other and with God. We have emotions. We have an appreciation for beauty. We have a moral consciousness discerning right from wrong. It is important that we understand this about ourselves.

Beginning in Gen 2:4 the focus shifts away from creation in general and for the rest of Genesis, for that matter the entire rest of the Bible, all the way thru Revelation, the focus is on God's relationship with man.

READ Genesis 2:4

"These are the generations..." The Hebrew word translated as generations here refers to family histories. The term "Lord God" appears for the very first time. It's the covenant name for God, Yahweh, Jehovah. It's the formal name used by God's people for God. This verse definitely has man and his relationship with his Creator in mind. The Bible contains

several lengthy genealogies, family histories. They trace the generations of man from the originally created man and woman (Adam and Eve) all the way down to Jesus. So, v 4 is a transition verse drawing our attention to man's early history and his relationship to God.

READ Genesis 2:5-6

A lot of people have mistakenly interpreted v 5 as referring back to Day Three when God created plants and trees. Some wrongly see these verses as a rehash of the creation account. But that's not the case. We are in Day Six when God created man. We know plants and trees already existed. The "bush and plant of the field" are obviously different plants. But what plants are they? The answer comes later in the text after the Fall of man in Genesis Chapter 3. In Genesis 3:17-19 God tells Adam, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread." So, the plants of Genesis 2:5 are those that become quite prominent after the fall, namely, thorns, thistles and weeds and cultivated crops that will be the product of man's tilling of the soil. Before the Fall there was no cultivated land. The earth brought forth its own food naturally produced by seeds of its own.

The last part of v 5 tells us that at this point there was no rain yet, no evaporation of water up into the clouds and then released over the earth. Instead, there was, v 6, a "mist" that rose up from the earth and watered it. This mist can be better translated as flow. So, a flow of water, most likely underground springs, gushed up and kept the ground saturated. This allowed plant and tree life to flourish. It is in this environment that God forms man. These verses lay out the setting for man's creation.

READ Genesis 2:7

Notice once again that there is no evolution process mentioned here. Humans did not evolve from apes! Instead God forms man. Isaiah uses the analogy of the potter and the clay (Isaiah 29:16) in his discussion of God

creating man. God personally forms man out of the dust and then breathes into him life. And then God takes great care of this newly created man.

READ Genesis 2:8-9

God makes a special home for man, the garden of Eden. God becomes the first gardener. "Eden" means well-watered place. It's a garden paradise. Moses describes Eden's location, v 8, as "in the east."

It's impossible to know for sure where Eden was because the world that existed before the Flood was somewhat different both geographically and topographically than after the flood. But "in the east" probably means it was east of the Promised Land, east of Israel. The most beautiful trees are planted in the garden of Eden as well as the best plants for food. Man has everything he needs to survive. The prophet Ezekiel gives us a few more details (Ezekiel Chapter 28) about the garden of Eden, which he calls "the garden of God," as a place that contained every precious stone. Ezekiel then mentions many of the same precious stones we saw in our study of Revelation in Chapter 21 associated with the foundation of the New Jerusalem. He describes "the holy mountain of God" indicating that Eden was likely up on an elevation as opposed to down in a valley. We know this must be true because as we are about to see rivers flowed out of Eden in different directions. And we know that water flows downhill. Ezekiel Chapter 31 talks about how the garden of Eden contained towering trees, cedars and firs, and how all the birds of heaven nested in their branches.

Notice that in addition to the plethora of trees present God also placed two supernatural trees in the middle of Eden: (1) the tree of life and (2) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Both had special properties. The tree of life could sustain life. The other tree somehow produced the knowledge of evil. Man already had the knowledge of good because good was all that was around him. It is all he knew – a perfect world unstained by sin. We know from Genesis 1:31 that the finished creation is "very

good." The tree of life is a unique tree which we will see again in the eternal kingdom (Revelation 2:7, 22:2, 14).

However, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will NOT be part of the eternal kingdom. Yet God in His sovereignty chooses to place this tree in the garden of Eden. Why would God do that? Well He had a reason. We'll talk about that when we get to v 16-17.

READ Genesis 2:10-14

A river flows through the garden. It divides and becomes four rivers, which in turn flow out of the garden. The names of the rivers are given: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates. We know from Genesis Chapter 10 that the river Pishon flowed southward probably toward Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The land of Havilah where there is gold is likely the same as Ophir in Genesis Chapter 10 and talked about several times in the Old Testament. It is always associated with much gold. The river Gihon flowed westward to the land of Cush (Ethiopia). The Tigris river flowed NW toward Assyria. The Euphrates flowed SE toward the Persian Gulf. These rivers flow out of Eden so it must be at a higher elevation than the places the rivers are flowing toward.

READ Genesis 2:15-17

God gives newly created man a task to perform. He is to work and to keep the garden. Remember that this is prior to the Fall and before the Flood, so no irrigation is required; there are no leaves to rake; no trash to pick up; no weeds to pull; no planting of seeds required. Oh, I'm sure there must have been some things that needed tending to, but it sounds like before the Fall man's job was fairly easy!

God gives man one command, one simple rule to follow, v 16-17, "You can eat of any tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The penalty for eating from that particular tree is stated: "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." This is interesting because at the time God gives this command there's no death or at least no death has been recorded yet. Somehow man knows what dying means

though we are not told how. The bottom line is whatever “surely die” means it must not be a good thing.

Well we all know how the story goes. In Genesis Chapter 3 man disobeys God and eats of this tree. He sins and death results. Do you think God knew all of that would happen? Yes, of course He did. So why would God place this tree there in the garden where it could potentially be a temptation? Where God knew it would be the source of man’s undoing? This is one of those great theological debates. One commentator says it was to test man’s loyalty and love for His Creator. Perhaps. But knowing what would happen, sovereign, all-knowing, wise God puts it there anyway. Why? In order that the whole story of the redemption of man might play out, which it does, and reveal to us in His time the greatest characteristics of God – His love, grace and mercy toward us.

Now, from a purely logical standpoint there is no reason at all for man to disobey God and eat from that tree. He already has everything he needs (he will after God makes woman). The consequences for disobedience are dire. Logically it doesn’t seem like much of a temptation given man’s great life there in the garden. To me it’s a bit like walking along the edge of a cliff – why would anybody in their right mind do that? Well, we’ll talk about that next week!

READ Genesis 2:18-23

In the account of God making woman, it’s interesting to note that God recognizes man’s need for a partner, a helper even before man does. We see that in v 18. God said, “This is not good. I will make him a helper fit for him.” Then God brings all the animals to the man to name, v 19. In the process of naming all the animals the man notices that each of the various animal species has a partner. Each are male and female. But none of these creatures, v 20 says, were “fit for him.” None of the animals met the man’s need for intimate companionship. The man recognizes that he alone has no partner. So while the man sees his need in v 20, God had already planned to do something about it, back in v 18.

And so it is that in v 21 God becomes the first anesthesiologist and the first surgeon. God performs surgery on the man. God pulls out His divine scalpel and the ESV says He takes out a rib. A better translation of the Hebrew here would be "side." God removes some flesh, tissue, blood and bone from the man and uses that material to form a female version of man, later called woman. So man was formed out of dirt while woman was formed out of man. When man and woman are created they are full grown adults. And both were made in the image of God. After the surgery is performed God brings this newly created partner to the man. I think that the man's eyes must have lit up when he first saw the woman. I think of a wedding and the look on a groom's face when he sees his bride walking down the aisle toward him.

In v 23 we have the first ever recorded love song. The man sees his new partner and breaks out in song. We used to read Bible stories to our grandkids at bedtime and I remember telling them when man saw his new partner his reaction was, "WOE, MAN!!" Although I said that as a joke I don't think it is too far off. Man was impressed. He liked what he saw! "God, you did good!" The Hebrew word for man is Ish. Woman is Ishshah. The verb form of Ishshah, means "to be soft and delicate." The bottom line here is that the man and woman, though both human beings and made in the image of God are uniquely different. And while they are partners together in God's plan, they complement each other. God knew what He was doing!

READ Genesis 2:24-25

Here God establishes the foundation for marriage. This is His design. One man, one woman, each one leaving their parents and holding fast (KJV "cleaving") to each other, becoming one flesh. Notice what the Bible does NOT say – *[what I am about to say may not be considered politically correct in our day, but it must be pointed out]* – NOT two men. NOT two women. NO adultery. NO divorce. You can argue and justify your position on each one of these points. But listen to me – they were NOT part of God's original design as laid out here in Genesis Chapter 2. Hebrews 13:4

says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

Just a brief comment on the gift of singleness... some people have this gift. I have several good friends who do. They have chosen to remain single. But that is the exception and not the norm. Paul addresses this issue at length in 1 Corinthians Chapter 7. I would like to see our churches do a better job in singles ministry. Some are single by their own choice. But many are single because of death and divorce. All singles need to be ministered to including those in this class.

Genesis Chapter 2 ends with an interesting statement, v 25, "the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Why were they not ashamed? Because they didn't know evil. At this point they're completely innocent, like little children. There is no sexual immorality. The first man and woman do not have any twisted, perverted thoughts or desires. That was all produced later by the Fall. We will look at that next time.

After the Fall there is a downward spiral. In Genesis Chapter 4 you have murder and polygamy. In Genesis Chapter 9 you have evil thoughts and evil words. In Genesis Chapter 16 you have adultery. In Genesis Chapter 19 you have homosexuality. In Genesis Ch 34 you have fornication and rape. In Genesis Chapter 38 you have incest and prostitution. In Genesis Chapter 39 you have seduction. As soon as the Fall of man occurs, the enemy of the souls of men and women, Satan, goes after the marriage relationship with a vengeance. And he continues his assault even in our own day. So then, it is important that we pray for each other, especially for our marriages.