

Paradise

Genesis 2:4–24 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION: In theology, there is a concept known as the ***Law of First Use*** - that is to say, that great significance is found in the initial introduction of a word or concept. In other words, to understand something fully, you should give great attention to the first time it was mentioned in God's Word. Genesis is packed with a great many "firsts". None so significant as the first marriage. I would go as far as to say that a careful study of Genesis 2 is necessary to fully grasp all that God intends for your marriage.

CONTEXT: Genesis 2 is, in some ways, a retelling of Genesis 1, with the emphasis on the Creation of Man and Woman. Another way to think of it: Genesis 1 presents Creation in a more ***technical*** sense, while Genesis 2 presents it in a more ***intimate*** sense.

Genesis 1 - refers to God in the more technical sense as Elohim, which is translated as "God".
Genesis 2 - introduces the NAME of God, Yaweh Elohim, translated, "The Lord God".

4b. in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

So Yaweh Elohim, the Lord God, will very personally and intimately fashion His image bearer.

Genesis 2:4–3:1 (ESV)

⁴ These are the ***generations*** of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

This is the first of 10 occurrences of the phrase, "***these are the generations***," found in the book of Genesis. The rest introduce a Genealogy of a specific individual -sons of Noah/Terah/Ishmael/Isaac/Esau/Jacob. But here, we see these are the generations of the Heavens and the Earth - in other words, while not everyone can trace their lineage back to Abraham, all who are born can trace their lineage back to Adam and Genesis 2:4.

⁵ When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—

The author here gives us something about the ***philosophy of the creator's design***. The Earth would be formed so that it would never reach its potential without man. Man would be formed in such a way that his survival would depend upon the Earth and his tending to it.

- Oh, there would be trees that would bear fruit, but the fruit would never reach its potential until there was a man to cultivate it.
- The man likewise would find his sustenance in the fruit that was produced.

We will see this same principle woven through everything God's creates outside of Himself.

Nothing in all of creation is entirely sufficient in and of itself - that includes you and me. For us to reach our ultimate potential, we will need others.

God places gifts in other people that you will need, so that only together does the church function as it ought. In other words, you are both **remarkably gifted and significantly insufficient**.

Thus, the principle of **Symbiosis**. John Maxwell said it well: *"One is too small a number to accomplish greatness."*

Jesus had the 12, Paul had Silas, The Lone Ranger had Tonto, R2-D2 had C3-P0. You will need others to reach your full potential.

The Earth would need Adam... so look at verse 7.

7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Everything else the Lord God has made, he made out of nothing. But with Man, he **took Earth to make the Earthling**.

The rest of creation, in all of its complexity, had been spoken into existence. Yet, scripture tells us that God was far more intimately involved in the formation of man. This time, God places His hands in the dirt and forms man as a potter would form a vessel—fearfully and wonderfully made.

Then, once the man is fully formed, Yaweh Elohim breathed into him...The Hebrew word for breath here is **nēšāmá** rather than the more common **rûah**. While other creatures possessed **rûah**, God only breathed His **nēšāmá** into man, underscoring that this creature is very special and unique.

There is some indication that this breath is more than **physical** breath, but it also speaks of the **spiritual** life that was breathed into man. We see this connection in other places:

Isaiah 42:5 (ESV)

5 Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives **breath** to the people on it and **spirit** to those who walk in it:

Job 27:3 (ESV)

3 as long as my **breath** is in me, and the **spirit** of God is in my nostrils,

So, while the world tells you that man is simply a more advanced cousin to the Ape, Scripture teaches that a Loving God intimately forms man.

⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Now this Garden, EDEN was very special.

Eden was Cultivated -

⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

God designed Eden with both **form** and **function**—specific trees were planted, those that were pleasant to the sight. The idea here is that God landscaped the garden; he specifically chose those plants, trees, and shrubs that Adam would uniquely enjoy.

Those included those trees and plants that would be food for the man. Notice, not simply food, but **good food**. There is a difference, you know.

ILLUSTRATION: I am reading a 3-part series on the Civil War, and I read where Stonewall Jackson discovered that he enjoyed butter on his bread; thus, as an act of discipline, he decided to never butter his bread again. I, on the other hand, figure that's why the good Lord gave us butter.

Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 5:19 (ESV) that God doesn't only give you things... He can also give you the POWER to enjoy them.

God wanted Adam to ENJOY Eden - That is the kind of God we serve. When we say God is good, this is what we mean: he desires for you to not only have life, but have it more abundantly.

If you do not enjoy life, you ought to stop and ask, "Why?" Perhaps you didn't realize you were supposed to. Perhaps you have somehow sabotaged your ability to enjoy, but God can restore that.

There were two very unique trees planted in the Garden:

9b. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- **The Tree of Life** - This tree was very special. The fruit of this tree was the key to man's longevity. In fact, after the fall, God drove man out of the Garden, lest he eat of this tree and live forever in his fallen state. In the New Heaven, we are told this tree has been cultivated and multiplied along the river of life - and it bears its

fruit in every season, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

- **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil** - Again, this was a very special tree. Placed into the garden by God. One would expect that it served a purpose beyond being an opportunity for man to sin - that would not align with the character of God. We can't be certain what that purpose was.

Yet, I want to float a ***hypothesis*** and support it as far as I can with scripture. Whatever the fruit of this tree provided, it was connected to ***knowledge***.

We read in **Genesis 3:6 (ESV)** ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was ***good for food***, and that it was a ***delight to the eyes***, and that the tree was to be ***desired to make one wise***, she took of its fruit and ate...

How did she know the fruit of this tree was ***edible***? How would you figure out if a fruit was edible or poisonous? You see, animals eat it. Perhaps animals ate of its fruit. Only man is forbidden to eat you, see.

How did she know that it was to be ***desired to make one wise***? Again, this is simply a hypothesis... but perhaps this is the fruit that animals ate, which made them able to communicate. Thus, the serpent could communicate with Eve.

And thus, the serpent suggested, if humans who were already far superior in their mental faculties ate, they would surely become like God Himself. That is simply a hypothesis, but it seems to hold.

Eden was Cultivated, secondly, Eden was Elevated -

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

What is required for a river to flow? Well, there must be a descent in ***elevation***. So, we may surmise that Eden was elevated, likely on a mountain.

Later in **Ezekiel 28:13-14**, when God speaks to Satan, He says: "Thou hast been in Eden, the Garden of God... the Holy ***Mountain*** of God".

There is something about Mountains:

- The substitutionary atonement in place of Abraham's son took place on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2).
- It was also on Mount Moriah that David saw the Angel of the LORD ready to destroy Jerusalem. David built an altar there and made atonement through sacrifice (1 Chronicles 21:15-17).
- Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1).
- It was on the Mount of Carmel that God brought His straying people back to Himself through sacrifice in the days of Elijah;

- On Mt. Sinai, (also called Horeb) God revealed His saving Presence to Elijah, and recommissioned him as His messenger to the nations (1 Kings 19)
- In His first major sermon, the Jesus preached his sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:1).
- His official appointment of His apostles was made on a mountain (Mark 3:13-19).
- He was transfigured before His disciples on a mountain (Matthew 17:1-2)
- On a mountain, He gave His final announcement of judgment upon the faithless Covenant people (Matthew 24:3).
- After the Last Supper, the Lord ascended a mountain with His disciples, and proceeded from there to a Garden... it should be of know suprise that the first Adam was in a garden on a mountain, and the second Adam (Christ) was in a garden on a Mountain.
- Christ commanded His disciples to meet Him on a mountain, where He commissioned them to disciple the nations with the Gospel, and promised to send the Holy Spirit; and from there He ascended into the Cloud (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-19).
- When God showed John the Heavenly City, he took him to a great and high Mountain.

However else you imagine Eden - see it on a mountain.

Moses gives us the names of the 4 rivers...

¹¹ The name of the first is the **Pishon**. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the **gold of that land is good**;

One has to wonder, what makes some gold... not good?

bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the **Gihon**. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the **Euphrates**.

Now before you break out the map and try to locate Eden, remember this is pre-flood and all of that likely the course of these rivers changed during the deluge.

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

As perfect as Eden was - **the garden wouldn't tend itself**. It required the work of man to perpetuate its fruit. The work of man was to be that of a **husbandman** - interestingly, the garden would not be the only thing he would cultivate.

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Now there was but one rule - don't eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You see, while the fruit may have had a positive effect on animals, it would

have a devastating effect on Man. In love, God warned man not to eat it. One law, one command, rooted in the deepest sense of love - ***don't eat of that one tree.***

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

This is the first time God said something was ***not good***. It is presumed that everything else God had made was good. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, served some purpose, and that purpose was good. The only thing NOT GOOD was that Adam was alone.

The declaration of "Not Good" was likely rooted in several places.

- First, it was impossible for Adam to image the nature of the God who was ONE IN THREE. We mentioned that last week.
- Second, don't you imagine that Adam was a bit lonely? He had a relationship - he could commune with God, he could commune with the animals... but he couldn't commune with someone like himself.

There is something about humanity that desires to see ourselves in others. You can be in a crowd of 1,000 people, but unless someone in that crowd is like you... you will suffer loneliness.

NOW - As we have seen, God has a flair for the dramatic... notice how he sets the scene:

¹⁹ Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

This is what is called "***Nomenclature***" ***Authority*** - the right to give something its name.

- It was no accident that President Trump changed the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. It was the ultimate flex of authority.
- This is why Parents name children.
- This is why the wife takes the name of her husband.

Adam - would NAME the other animals because he had dominion over them.

²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

Do you see it? Adam had observed that for every creature the Lord God had made, there was a similar companion.

- The boy ducks had girl ducks...
- The boy chimps had girl chimps...

But there was no correlation for Adam.

ILLUSTRATION: A Deacon told me that at that point, God brought man a chimpanzee, a gorilla, a orangoutang - but Adam said, "God that isn't exactly what I had in mind - I wanted someone who can rub my back, cook gourmet food, always look beautiful and attractive in my presence... God said, "Adam, that will cost you an arm and a leg..." To which Adam replied, "What can I get for a rib?"

²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

ILLUSTRATION: Interestingly, Sir James Young Simpson believed God's Word, and in reading this passage, he came up with the idea for using chloroform to cause people to go into a deep sleep when performing a surgery.

²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

- Now, man had been made from the Earth and for the Earth.
 - Woman was made from the man and for the man.
- We can again apply the principle of symbiosis. They will require one another.

Just as the earth could bear fruit without man, that fruit would never reach its potential without man. In the same way - man could serve God without woman, but he would never reach his potential in that service without woman.

ILLUSTRATION: Friday, I had the honor of bringing the invocation at the change of command ceremony at NAS Jax. One of our own, **Commander Daniel Russell**, was installed as the new Commander. He told the story of a previous commander visiting his wife's hometown. After meeting one of his wife's old boyfriends, he said, "Just think, if you had married that guy, you wouldn't have been married to a Navy Commander". To which she wisely replied, "If I had married that guy, he would have become a Navy Commander".

That is exactly how it is - she makes him all God intended for him to be!

²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

These are the first recorded words man ever spoke. In Hebrew, it is a beautiful poem. Some have suggested that Adam likely sang these words over Eve.

Then we see an editorial comment in verse 24...

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

That is a way of saying — all that was true of this marriage, is in some ways, true of your marriage. That's why you get married. For the same reasons they did.

1. **Companionship**—Adam wanted someone like himself. By the way, that is important in marriage—not just that you are attracted to a person, but that they are like you—equally yoked, as Paul called it.
2. **Completion** - There would be things that Adam could not do without Eve, namely, fulfill his purpose to fill the Earth and subdue it.
3. **Complementing** - Paul quotes this passage in 1 Corinthians 11 when he says, 1

Corinthians 11:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but *woman is the glory of man.*

- When the Angels looked at ADAM, they said, “Wow, God is cool!” Because Adam was the image and glory of God.
- When the Angels looked at EVE, they said, “Wow, Adam is cool!” Because Eve was the image of God, but the glory of Adam.

²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Moses stops momentarily and speaks for all of mankind when he says - look at them there, together, in paradise, naked and **NO SHAME**.

All of that is about to change... but let it sink in. This is what you were created for - Scripture tells us that eternity is set in the heart of man, saved or lost. There is something in you that yearns for that - and you should.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: Life began in perfection by God's design... then sin enters and things fall apart... The Gospel is God's way of inviting us back.

