

Genesis Lesson 2: Genesis 2:4 – 2:25

Lecture

- Some authors have viewed the Genesis 2 creation story as a different account of creation. They might characterize it as more of a “campfire story” which answers such questions as “Exactly how did God create man?” or “Where did man first live?”
- Rather, we can see it as a complementary continuation of the Genesis 1 creation story.
- Genesis 1 describes *what* God created. Genesis 2 describes *how* God created.
- We discussed in our study of Genesis 1 that the word for God used there is *Elohim*.
- In Genesis 2 and 3, the word for God is *Elohim Yahweh*.
 - Yahweh is God’s personal name. The name was so sacred that ancient Jewish tradition substituted “Lord” (Adonai) for Yahweh.
 - Beginning with Genesis 2, God is seen as the God who is in relationship with mankind (Yahweh). He is the God who is Israel’s covenant partner.
 - Yet, less we forget, he is also the God of all creation (Elohim).
 - We will focus more on the name of God when we get to Genesis 3 and discuss the Fall of mankind.
- Scholars have tried to correlate these 2 passages from Genesis 1:11 and Genesis 2:5:
 - “Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.”
 - “Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground.”
 - Again, we should see the Genesis 2 passage as a complementary continuation of Genesis 1.

- In their commentaries on Genesis, Victor Hamilton and Gordon Wenham harmonize the 2 passages in this manner:
 - The Hebrew word for *shrub* used in Genesis 2 denotes a bushy plant that lived in arid areas. These shrubs were not food sources. Genesis 1 does not use this word.
 - The Hebrew word for *plant* is used in both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Plants can be both wild and cultivated and are a source of food. A modern example would be the blackberry bush.
 - Genesis 2:5 describes 2 types of land: an open, uncultivated field suitable for animal grazing and a dusty land which could produce edible food with irrigation and manual effort.
 - God had not yet sent rain, and he had not yet created anyone to work the ground. The land could produce vegetation under the right circumstances.
 - Again, we see the Genesis 1 distinction of *what* vs. the Genesis 2 *how*.
- Beginning with Genesis 2:7, we see God portrayed as anthropomorphic.
 - Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human form, character, or attributes to non-human entities.
 - “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”
 - The word *formed* in the Hebrew is the same word used to describe the creative, shaping work of a potter. But a potter uses clay, not dust.
 - Harmonizing Genesis 1:27 with Genesis 2:7, we see the *word* of God has been augmented by the *work* of God (Hamilton).
 - Man being formed from the dust of the ground has several connections. Man’s job, as outlined in Genesis 2:15, is to work the dirt. When man dies, he will return to the dust of the ground (Genesis 3:19).

- The Old Testament uses 2 words for “breath”: *ruah* and *n^esama*.
 - *Ruah*, when used, applies to God, man, animals, and false gods.
 - *N^esama* only applies to Yahweh and to man. Only man receives the divine breath of Yahweh. This sets him apart from animals, which also breathe.
- I love the description of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:8-15.
 - It was well-watered.
 - It had trees that were nice to look at and some trees produced good food to eat.
 - It was an oasis.
 - It was paradise.
 - Again, we see anthropomorphism in this section. God is now pictured as a horticulturist. In effect, God has given man a leg up on the work he has been asked to do in the Garden by planting the garden for him.
 - More importantly, God may walk in the garden (Genesis 3:8), but God does not live in the garden. God’s abode is in the heavens.
- Where was Eden located?
 - It was located “in the east.”
 - Since Moses was the author of Genesis, we can think of the Garden of Eden as being east of the land of Israel.
 - By giving us specific names of rivers and territories, it is clear that the writer and the editor(s) of Genesis 2 believed that Eden was a real place.
 - 2 of the rivers mentioned, the Tigris and Euphrates, surrounded ancient Mesopotamia. However, the rivers Pishon and Gihon have not been satisfactorily identified. Likewise, the lands of Cush and Havilah have not been identified.
 - Looking at maps, scholars have identified 2 possible locations for the Garden of Eden.

- Let's now talk about the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
 - There was no prohibition on eating from the tree of life, only on eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
 - In his commentary, John Walton suggests that eating from the tree of life would extend life rather than instantly granting immortality.
 - There is no suggestion in Genesis 2 that God intended for mankind to be immortal beings.
 - When man is cut off from the tree of life after the Fall (Genesis 3:22), he will effectively die much sooner than he would have without access to the tree of life.
 - Do we of this modern age accept the idea of a food that can extend life? How many of us drink tea for its antioxidant components or eat blueberries because their antioxidant flavonoids could slow mental decline?
 - How should we interpret the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Gordon Wenham recaps 5 scholarly interpretations in his commentary:
 - The consequence of obeying or disobeying God's commandments.
 - Man would have known good by obeying; because he disobeyed, he now knows evil. Wenham rejects this interpretation based upon Deuteronomy 1:39 which observes that the very young do not know good and evil. He also points out that Genesis 3:5 and 3:22 offered knowledge appropriate only for the divine.
 - "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5
 - And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:22

- Moral discernment.
 - Wenham and other scholars reject this interpretation as they believe that man was always expected to exercise moral discretion, as evidenced by God's role for man and his direction regarding this specific tree.
- Sexual knowledge.
 - This interpretation is incongruous in the context of Genesis 1 and 2 and there is no suggestion that sexual knowledge was wrong for man, given God's instructions that man and woman should be fruitful and multiply.
- Omniscience, which means knowing everything. This is an attribute of God.
 - In Genesis 3, the snake beguiles the woman into eating the fruit, telling her that she would be like God, knowing good and evil. All the knowledge that man and woman gained were guilt, shame and a recognition that they were naked (Genesis 3:7-8).
- Wisdom in the context of moral autonomy.
 - It is this interpretation on which Wenham and other scholars have settled. But this is a specific wisdom: deciding what is right or wrong without God's revealed will. They point to the following Scripture passages:
 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

- The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.
¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.
¹¹ **By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.** ¹² **But who can discern their own errors?**
 Forgive my hidden faults. Psalms 19:7-12

- And the LORD God said, “The man has now become **like one of us**, knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:22
- Let’s conclude our study of Genesis 2 with a focus on woman, a suitable helper for man.
 - Remember this passage from Geneses 1:27:
 - So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
 - We should not forget that man’s suitable helper was also created in the image of God.
 - This gives context to Genesis 2:20b, which tells us that after naming all the animals, no suitable helper for Adam was found. No animal could be a helper, as animals were not created in the image of God.
 - Up to the point of Genesis 2:18, everything God did has been described as good or very good. Now, we have a situation which is not good: man’s lack of a suitable companion.
 - The Hebrew word used for helper in Genesis 2:18 is *ezer*. This word does not connote a superior/subordinate or associate relationship. The most frequent use of this Hebrew word in Scripture is used to describe Yahweh’s relationship to Israel.
 - We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. Psalms 33:20

- The language used to create Adam's helper is different than the language used to create Adam.
 - Genesis 2:7 uses language which connotes God as a potter.
 - Genesis 2:22 uses language which connotes God as a builder. Eve is the first thing God has created from another living thing through a creative divine act, according to Victor Hamilton.
 - Eve is created from man's rib and flesh or his side.
- In his commentary, Matthew Henry sums this up well:
 - "Not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."
- Genesis 2:24's comment about a man and his wife becoming one flesh has several points:
 - This certainly points to the sexual union after marriage which can produce children.
 - It is also a reference to the spiritual, emotional, and unity bonds found in the relationship.
 - It literally takes male and female to form one flesh. As God said in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

Genesis Lesson 2: Genesis 2:4 – 2:25

Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm,²⁶ to water a land where no one lives, an uninhabited desert,²⁷ to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?²⁸ Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew?

Job 38:25-28

1. How do the verses of Genesis 2:4-6 describe the state of the earth?

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.⁵ Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,⁶ but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Genesis 2:4-6

2. How did God create man?

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7

3. What is the implication of “from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7)?

- Man was not formed from other animals or other cells.
- We think of dust as immaterial and worthless. We might describe it as nothing important. Yet, God formed the pinnacle of his creation from this dust.

4. What is your understanding of God breathing the breath of life into man (Genesis 2:7)?

- God made man come alive by sharing his breath with him. This adds more nuance to being made in the image of God.

5. Read Genesis 2:8-14. Describe the place where God put man.

Now the LORD God had planted a **garden** in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.⁹ The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—**trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**¹⁰ A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. Genesis 2:8-14

6. Genesis is part of the Torah (the first 5 books of the Old Testament) which was written by Moses. Think about the arid nature of Egypt (outside of the Nile itself), the Sinai Peninsula, and the land of Canaan. What do you think the Israelites thought when they heard the description Moses wrote in Genesis 2:8-14?

It sounded perfect, beautiful, heavenly, restful, and refreshing.

7. According to Genesis 2:15, what role did God give man?

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Genesis 2:15

8. What does this role suggest about the expectation of work in our lives? (For context, read Ecclesiastes 5:18-20.)

- This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot.¹⁹ Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.²⁰ They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart. Ecclesiastes 5:18-20
- God does not expect us to be idle. Going back to Genesis 1:28, there is work involved in having dominion over God's creation.

9. What permission did God grant to man in verse 16?

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden Genesis 2:16

10. What restriction did God make in verse 17?

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die. Genesis 2:17

11. Why did God make a restriction?

- God gave man the opportunity to exercise his free will, to choose to obey God or to sin.
- God knew that the knowledge of good and evil would get man into trouble.
- God was protecting man from what the knowledge of good and evil would bring.

12. Read Genesis 2:18-20. The Genesis 1 account had declared days 1 to 5 of creation “good” and day 6 as “very good”. What do we learn about God’s opinion of his creation of man from verse 18?

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:18

13. What does this statement suggest about human beings?

God created us to be relational beings who were created to help each other.

14. How do you interpret the statement “a helper suitable for/fit for him?”

- **An indispensable partner; a companion**
- **We should not construe a helper as inferior.**

15. How do Psalm 33:20 and Psalm 70:5 offer context about a helper?

- **We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. Psalms 33:20**
- **But as for me, I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; LORD, do not delay. Psalms 70:5**
- **The Lord God is our helper.**

16. What duty did God give man?

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. 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.²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. Genesis 2:19-20

17. After man completed this duty, what was the result?

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. Genesis 2:20

18. Read Genesis 2:18 along with Genesis 1:28a. What is the connection between the verses?

- **The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:18**
- **God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Genesis 1:28**

- The helper God would create for man would enable him to be fruitful and multiply (to reproduce).

19. Read Genesis 2:21-23. How is the creation of woman described?

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man. Genesis 2:21-23

20. Why would woman be considered a suitable helper for man?

- She was his female counterpart.
- She was made from man's rib to work along side him.
- She was also made in God's image and explicitly for man.

21. According to Genesis 2:24, what was God's plan for marriage?

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Genesis 2:24

22. What was the name of the first man?

Adam

23. How does Genesis 2:25 describe the condition of Adam and his wife?

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Genesis 2:25

24. What word or words would you use to describe this condition?

- Innocent
- Trusting
- Without sin

Genesis Lesson 2

Genesis 2:4-2:25

2 Different Account of Creations?

- Is Genesis 2 a Different Account of Creation?
- Is It a Campfire Story, Answering Questions About How God Created Man Or Where Man First Lived?
- Rather, It Is a Complementary Continuation of Genesis 1
- Genesis 1: *What* God Created
- Genesis 2: *How* God Created

Words for God

- Genesis 1 Uses *Elohim*
- Genesis 2 and 3 Use *Elohim Yahweh*
- Yahweh = God's Personal Name; So Sacred That Ancient Jewish Tradition Substituted "Lord" (Adonai) for Yahweh
- Yahweh Is the God Who Is in Relationship with Mankind; Israel's Covenant Partner
- He Is Also the God of All Creation (Elohim)

Correlating Genesis 1:11 and Genesis 2:5

- The Genesis 2 Passage Is a Complementary Continuation of Genesis 1
- Victor Hamilton and Gordon Wenham:
 - The Hebrew Word for *Shrub* in Genesis 2 Denotes a Bushy Plant in Arid Areas; Not a Food Source; Not Used in Genesis 1
 - The Hebrew Word for *Plant* is Used in Both Chapters; Plants Can Be Both Wild and Cultivated and Are a Source of Food (Blackberry Bush)
 - Genesis 2:5 Describes 2 Types of Land:
 - An Open, Uncultivated Field for Animal Grazing
 - A Dusty Land Which Can Produce Food with Irrigation and Manual Effort
 - God Had Not Yet Sent Rain; He Had Not Created Anyone to Work the Ground; Could Produce Vegetation Under the Right Circumstances
 - Genesis 1 *What* vs. Genesis 2 *How*

God Portrayed as Anthropomorphic

- Anthropomorphism = the Attribution of Human Form, Character, or Attributes to Non-human Entities
- Genesis 2:7
- The Word *Formed* Is the Same Word Used to Describe the Work of a Potter; But a Potter Uses Clay, Not Dust
- Hamilton: the *Word* of God Has Been Augmented by the *Work* of God
- Man Being Formed from the Dust of the Ground:
 - Genesis 2:15: Man's Job Is to Work the Dirt
 - Genesis 3:19: When Man Dies, He Will Return to the Dust of the Ground

Breath in the Old Testament

- *Ruah*, When Used, Applies to God, Man, Animals, and False gods
- *Nesama* Only Applies to Yahweh and to Man
- Only Man Receives the Divine Breath of Yahweh
- This Sets Man Apart from Animals, Which Also Breathe

The Garden of Eden

- Well-watered
- Trees Nice to Look at and Some Trees Produced Good Food
- An Oasis
- A Paradise
- Anthropomorphism: God Is a Horticulturist
- God Has Given Man a Leg up on His Work in the Garden by Planting the Garden for Him
- God May Walk in the Garden (Genesis 3:8), But Does Not Live There; God's Abode Is in the Heavens

The Garden of Eden



Erastus Salisbury Field; undated; Museum of Fine Art, Boston, Massachusetts

Where Was Eden Located?

- “In the East”
- Since Moses Wrote Genesis, Think of the Garden of Eden as East of the Land of Israel
- By Naming Rivers and Territories, the Writer and Editor(s) Believed It Was a Real Place
- Tigris and Euphrates Rivers Surrounded Ancient Mesopotamia
- The Pishon and Gihon Rivers Have Not Been Identified; Neither Have the Lands of Cush and Havilah
- Scholars Have Identified 2 Possible Locations for the Garden of Eden

Possible Eden Locations



The Tree of Life



Table/Cover Carpet, circa 1600-1650; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York

The Tree of Life

- No Prohibition on Eating from the Tree of Life, Only on Eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
- John Walton: Eating from the Tree of Life Would Extend Life Rather Than Instantly Granting Immortality
- No Suggestion in Genesis 2 That God Intended for Mankind to Be Immortal Beings
- When Man Is Cut Off from the Tree of Life after the Fall (Genesis 3:22), He Will Die Much Sooner
- Do We of This Modern Age Accept the Idea of a Food That Can Extend Life? (Tea? Blueberries)

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil



Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; Peter Wenzel, 1745; Vatican Museum, Vatican City, Rome, Italy

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

- Gordon Wenham's Commentary Recaps 5 Interpretations:

The Consequence of Obeying or Disobeying God's Commandments	Rejected Based Upon Deuteronomy 1:39, Genesis 3:5,22
Moral Discernment	Rejected as Man Was Always Expected to Exercise Moral Discretion
Sexual Knowledge	Rejected as There Is No Suggestion That Sexual Knowledge Was Wrong for Man
Omniscience (Knowing Everything)	Rejected as All the Knowledge Man Gained Were Guilt, Shame, and a Recognition of Nakedness
Wisdom in the Context of Moral Autonomy	Where Most Scholars Have Settled; Deciding What Is Right or Wrong Without God's Revealed Will

A Suitable Helper for Man



The Creation of Adam and Eve; Isaac von Oosten, 17th Century; copyright: commons.Wikimedia.org

A Suitable Helper for Man

- Genesis 1:27; Created in the Image of God
- After Naming All the Animals, No Suitable Helper for Adam Was Found; Animals Were Not Created in the Image of God
- God Declares Man's Lack of a Suitable Companion Is Not Good
- Hebrew Word for Helper: *Ezer*; Does Not Connote a Superior/Subordinate or Associate Relationship
- Most Frequent Use of *Ezer* in Scripture Describes Yahweh's Relationship to Israel
- Psalm 33:20

A Suitable Helper for Man

- The Language Used to Create Adam's Helper is Different Than the Language Used to Create Adam
 - Genesis 2:7: God As a Potter
 - Genesis 2:22: God As a Builder; Eve Is the First Thing God Created from Another Living Thing (Victor Hamilton)
 - Eve Is Created from Man's Rib and Flesh or His Side
 - Matthew Henry: “Not Made out of His Head to Top Him, Not out of His Feet to Be Trampled Upon by Him, But out of His Side to Be Equal with Him, Under His Arm to Be Protected, and Near His Heart to Be Beloved”

One Flesh

- Points to the Sexual Union After Marriage Which Can Produce Children
- Also a Reference to the Spiritual, Emotional, and Unity Bonds Found in the Relationship
- It Takes Male and Female to Form One Flesh
- Genesis 2:18