

The Book of Beginnings

Man & Woman

Genesis 2:4-25

The first chapter of Genesis is a panoramic view of the creation of the world, “the heavens and the earth” (v1). The second chapter is a close-up of the making of mankind in the garden, the “earth and the heavens” (v4). This is the picture of life on the earth before sin enters—beautiful, abundant and harmonious. Although much has changed, this chapter does not leave us frustrated at what was blown, but by God’s grace with hope for what is and can be in our lives as his kingdom comes.

I. An Abundant Garden

God doesn’t make the earth and then decide as an afterthought to throw mankind into the mix. No shrubs or cultivated plants have come up yet because it hasn’t rained and man isn’t there to tend them (vv5-6). Yahweh God takes dust (*adamah*), forms Adam, and breathes the breath of life into his nostrils (v7). This is an intimate picture of God fashioning Adam, a handmade creation, and face-to-face filling him with life (cf. Ps. 139:13). You are not a machine that fell out of Random Factory or a cog in the cosmic machine. You are handcrafted divine workmanship. Yahweh God puts Adam in the east side of Eden, in a garden, and then grows every beautiful and tasty tree, including the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v9; cf. 1 Jn. 2:16). Eden is a high place with headwaters that split into four rivers which flow to happy places (vv10-14). *This* is where God puts Adam to tend and guard, and to eat of every tree except one lest he die (vv15-17). This is a paradise of *yes* with a single *no* clearly marked. Temptation is present, but God has taught and blessed, and calls Adam and Eve to wait for greater blessings at the right time (cf. 1 Kgs. 3:9).

II. Helpful Companionship

After calling creation “good” seven times, God says it’s “not good” for man to be alone. Adam needs a helper fit for him, literally “a helper as opposite him.” He names all the livestock, birds and beasts, but none would do (v20). God puts him into a deep, death-like sleep, takes a rib out of his side and forms Eve, the first blood shed in the history of the world. Eve is not less or more than Adam, but a perfect complement. Matthew Henry comments wonderfully, “Not 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.” Adam has an enormous amount of work that he can’t accomplish without her help. She is equal and yet very different, helping him in the world, his family, and his soul, a life-long treasure (Prov. 31:12).

III. Covenant Union

God brings Eve to Adam, and in the first human words ever recorded he praises her, probably singing. We speak of sharing blood. Adam says she is bone of his bone, flesh of flesh. She is called *ishah* because she was taken out of *ish*. Adam’s praise is beautiful, thoughtful and exuberant. So husbands should praise their wives. Here is the first wedding. God brings Adam to Eve, he cleaves to her, and they become one flesh (vv22, 24). A marriage is sexual union with covenant vows that are witnessed. Verse 24 is paradigmatic for all marriage: a man leaves his father and mother, cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh (cf. Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31). The order is important. They are naked and unashamed until sin enters. So much damage is done to us by sexual sin that many think it’s hopelessly corrupted. But we’re told that the marriage bed is honorable and undefiled (Heb. 13:4). The Bible begins with a garden wedding and ends in a garden wedding. The bride will be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure (Rev. 19:8). There is a river of life flowing through the city with new fruit every month (Rev. 22:2). The gospel takes away all of our sin and shame and invites us back into that garden to fellowship with God. By grace we grow in knowledge and wisdom, are healed from our broken relationships, and eat from the tree of life. God restores us to himself and to one another, preparing us for that ultimate wedding of Christ and the Church

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 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. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

1. God put Adam in the garden of _____. What kind of trees did God put there? Name three (look in verse 9).
2. Some people read the Bible as if it is a massive list of rules, like God is always telling us things not to do. Is the garden of Eden like that? What is the one rule God gave Adam and Eve (verses 16 & 17), and why do you think he gave it to them?
3. Good rules are given because our parents love us and the rules teach us to love others. Adam and Eve should have waited until God said they could eat of the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil. What is one thing you are waiting to do until the right time? Why is now not a good time to do it?
4. The first thing that a person says written down in Genesis is Adam's song about Eve. Draw a picture of him singing it, and then write your own song about your mom. Sing to her after (!) church.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

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." —Genesis 2:23