**Chapter 2**

**The Garden of Eden**

1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.

2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,

5 before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground;

6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

**Life in God's Garden**

8 The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

9 And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.

11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12 And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there.

13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush.

14 The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

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

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

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."

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

19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

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

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

**2:1-3**.

**The seventh day was the day of rest, the Sabbath.**

The structure of verses 2 and 3 in the Hebrew is well ordered in its clauses with parallel emphases on the adjective seventh.

**The number "seven" often represents the covenant** (the verb "swear" is related etymologically); thus it is no surprise that **the Sabbath became the sign of God's covenant at Sinai** (Ex 31:13,17).

**God blessed the seventh day and made it holy (sanctified it) because it commemorated the completion or cessation of His creative work.**

God's Sabbath rest became a predominant motif of Scripture.

**Here before the Fall it represented the perfect Creation, sanctified and at rest.**

**After the Fall this rest became a goal to be sought.**

The establishment of theocratic rest in the land, whether by Moses or by Joshua at the Conquest, demanded faith and obedience.

**Today believers enter into that Sabbath rest spiritually (Heb 4:8-10) and will certainly share in its full restoration.**

The account of Creation, seen through the eyes of the new nation of Israel in Moses' day, had great theological significance.

Out of the chaos and darkness of the pagan world God brought His people, teaching them the truth, guaranteeing them victory over all powers in heaven and earth, commissioning them to be His representatives, and promising them theocratic rest. So too it would encourage believers of all ages.

**B. THE SUCCESSION FROM THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH (2:4-4:26)**

**1. THE CREATION OF THE MAN AND THE WOMAN (2:4-25)**

**2:4 a.**

This section (vv. 4-25), as indicated in verse 4 a, traces the account of (what became of) the heavens and the earth when (beyôm, lit., "in the day," an idiom for "when") they were created.

**What became of Creation is that sin entered and devastated it.**

**2:4b-7**.

In the creation of Adam the contrast is striking: against the background of a time when there was no life, no growth, no rain, no one to till the ground, God took great care in forming man.

The **arrangement in these verses** includes **a title** (v. 4), **three circumstantial clauses** beginning in the Hebrew with **"when"** ("when" no shrub... had yet appeared, "when" there was no man to work the ground, "when" streams... watered the... ground), and **the verb beginning the narrative** (and [He] **formed**).

**This mirrors chapter 1** (title, 1:1; circumstantial clauses, 1:2; and the first of the narrative verbs, 1:3).

The repeated emphasis on the LORD God is significant (2:4-5,7-9,15-16,18-19,21-22).

**Name Jehovah introduced – “the Lord (Jehovah) God (Elohim)”**

**The sovereign Creator ("God") of chapter 1 is also the covenant-making Yahweh (LORD).**

Thus Israel would know that her LORD had created everything, and that He had formed mankind by special design.

The work of the Lord in creating human life involved both fashioning from the dust and inbreathing.

**The word formed (from yasar, 2:7) describes the work of an artist.**

Like a potter shaping an earthen vessel from clay, so God formed man from clay.

**Man was made by divine plan; also he was made from the earth.**

He is "earthy" in spite of subsequent dreams of being like God (3:5).

**The Hebrew for man ('adam, whence "Adam," 2:20) is related to the word for ground (°addmah; cf. 3:17).**

**God's breathing the breath of life into man transformed his form into a living being (lit., "a living soul").**

This made man a spiritual being, with a capacity for serving and fellowshipping with God.

With this special Creation in mind, the reader can see the significance of the Fall.

**Since the Fall, regeneration by the "inbreathing" of the Holy Spirit is essential in order for people to enjoy fellowship with God.**

**2:8-10**.

**Mankind was placed in a perfect setting.**

The garden provided the arena for man's test of obedience.

The description of the lavish garden (v. 8) and the trees (v. 9) and river in it (v. 10) leads up to the commandment: man could enjoy it all but he must not eat from the one forbidden tree (v. 17).

Whereas God had possibly created trees with the appearance of age (1:12), the trees in the garden were others that had grown later (2:9).

Among those trees in the garden was one that produced life (the tree of life) and another that produced knowledge (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), or at least eating from them did.

This "knowledge" was experiential.

"Good and evil," a merism for the things that protect life and that destroy life, would be experienced if the forbidden fruit were eaten (v. 17).

The potential for catastrophe was great if they in self-confident pride (hubris) overstepped their bounds and attempted to manipulate life.

The tree of life, on the other hand, was apparently a means of preserving and promoting life for Adam and Eve in their blissful state.

These trees were in the middle of the garden, apparently close to each other; they provided the basis for the testing to come.

**The trees (v. 9), the river (v. 10), and the precious gold and gems (vv. 11-12) in the garden will also be in the new earth in its eternal state.**

The new Creation will be endowed with all these elements (**Rev 21:10-11,21; 22:1-2**), thus indicating that paradise will be restored in the new earth.

**2:11-14**.

**These verses, a long parenthesis, describe the richness of the then-known world.**

The garden was probably in the area of the Persian Gulf, Judging from the place names in these verses.

If the geography of that area was the same after the Flood as before, then the Tigris (lit., Hiddeqel) and the Euphrates, the third and fourth rivers, can be identified.

The first of the four rivers, Pishon, was in Havilah, in north-central Arabia, east of Palestine.

The second river, Gihon, was in Cush, probably not Ethiopia but possibly the land of the Cassites (kassu in Akk.) in the mountains east of Mesopotamia.

**2:15-17**.

**Man's purpose is to provide spiritual service, as the carefully selected words indicate: he was placed (nuah, "set to rest") in the Garden... to work it (±abad, "to serve") and to take care of it.**

Whatever work he did was therefore described as his service to God.

**Verse 16 includes the first use in the Old Testament of sawah, the major verb for "command."**

**God's first command to man concerned life and death, good and evil.**

As with all God's subsequent commandments, there were positive blessings and negative prohibitions.

All earthly goods and pleasures were at man's disposal, except this one tree which was forbidden.

**The Hebrew wording in verses 16-17 states the command in strong terms: man could eat freely from all the other fruit, but if he ate from the forbidden tree he would surely die.**

Once again the primary lesson is related to the people of God under Moses.

**God prepared mankind with a specific design and gave them the capacity for moral responsibility.**

He set them in the Garden to be obedient servants, warning that before them was life or death, depending on whether they obeyed the commandment.

**Deut 30:11-20 set forth for Israel all the instructions parallel to the motifs of Gen 2:8-17: obedience to the commandments of God results in life and blessing.**

**2:18-25**.

**This section records the creation of the first woman and the institution of marriage; so it says much about the mainstay of Israel's society.**

**God intended husband and wife to be a spiritual, functional unity, walking in integrity, serving God, and keeping His commandments together.**

When this harmony is operative, society prospers under God's hand.

**Adam was alone and that was not good; all else in Creation was good** (cf.1:4,10,12,18,21,25).

**As man began to function as God's representative (naming the animals [2:19-20] represented his dominion over them; cf. 1:28), he became aware of his solitude (2:20).**

God therefore put him to sleep (v. 21) and created Eve from his flesh and bone (vv. 21-23).

God decided to make a helper suitable (lit., "**a helper corresponding to him**," or "a corresponding helper") for the man (v. 18).

**"Helper" is not a demeaning term; it is often used in Scripture to describe God Almighty** (e.g., Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, where it is trans. "help" in the NIV).

The description of her as "corresponding to him" means basically that what was said about him in Gen 2:7 was also true of her.

They both had the same nature.

But what man lacked (his aloneness was not good) she supplied, and what she lacked he supplied.

The culmination was one flesh (v. 24) - the complete unity of man and woman in marriage.

**Since Adam and Eve were a spiritual unity, living in integrity without sin, there was no need for instruction here on headship.**

**Paul later discussed that in relationship to the order of Creation (1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13).**

The words °al-ken (for this reason, Gen 2:24) are used frequently in Genesis.

**If the words in verse 24 were spoken directly by God to Adam, then the verb "leave" must be translated as the future will leave (as in the NIV).**

**But if God said those words through Moses, they should be translated in the present tense: "that is why a man leaves "**

**The implication is that marriage involves one male and one female becoming "one flesh."**

**Their nakedness (v. 25) suggests that they were at ease with one another without any fear of exploitation or potential for evil.**

Such fellowship was shattered later at the Fall and is retained only in a measure in marriage when a couple begins to feel at ease with each other.

**Here the nakedness, though literal, also suggests sinlessness.**