

## Genesis 2:4-7

Last time we finished the introductory material noted in Gen 1:1 -2:3 and today we start the study of the first toldot. Remember the Hebrew word toldot means generation. It is often preceded by the Hebrew word elah, so taken together they mean “what became of \_\_\_\_.” Since Moses wrote Genesis, but he was not an eye witness to the events which occurred, scholars believe he functioned as a compiler and editor of previously written texts and oral stories which had been passed down to him. But we must also recognize that God must have revealed a good part of it. Moses organized this material into eleven generational accounts which gave the story of what happened to the subject of each narration. Each toldot usually begins with the phrase “this is the account of” or “this is the book of, or the genealogy of” depending on what translation you have. The other important thing to remember about a toldot is the subject listed in the title of the toldot is not necessarily the main subject of the story. For example, in Genesis 11:27 it says, “This is the account of Terah’s family”, yet the main subject of the next 13 chapters is Abraham.

Today we start with the first toldot which is noted in Genesis 2:4a, *this is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth* (NLT) or we can say, this is the account of what became of the heavens and the earth. This toldot extends from Gen 2:4 through 4:26.

There is one other point to make by way of introduction and it is called the Law of Recurrence. Often in scripture there are two blocks of scripture side by side. The first block gives a chronological account of an event or person, and is then followed by a second block which relates to a time or place in the first block to give more texture and detail as to how certain events or things happened. Gen 2:4-25, is an excellent example of this Law of Recurrence for it gives us more detail as to what happened on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation which is noted in Gen 1:26-31. The emphasis in 1:26-31 is the relationship of the man and the woman to the created world whereas in chapter 2 the emphasis is on the relationship between the man and the woman.

This Toldot has three sections,

- a. Man in the Garden, 2:5-25.
- b. The Fall, 3:1-24
- c. Cain and Abel, 4:1-26

### **Man in the Garden**

Today we will start with the first section, Man in the Garden. It to, can be conveniently subdivided as follows:

- a. The Creation of the man Adam, 2:4b-7
- b. The Garden of Eden, 2:8-14
- c. The Edenic Covenant Part 2, 2:15-17
- d. The Creation of the woman, 2:18-25.

### Creation of the man Adam, 2:4b-7.

Vs 4b, *When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,*

The words *Lord God*, are the Hebrew words YHWH Elohim where God's personal name and the word for God are both used together. This combination of the two names is used 19 times in chapters 2 and 3. It is a reminder that God exists as God –Elohim, but He is also personal –YHWH. Verse 4b also introduces verse 5.

Vs 5, *neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the Lord God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil.*

In Gen 1:11-13 we have an account of the third day of creation when plant life was created, yet here in 2:5 it says *neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth*. So how do we reconcile this? Commentators have offered varied explanations, but here is the best.

Remember our law of Recurrence. Gen 2 focuses on Man and the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation. So, Gen 2 is a more detailed explanation of what occurred in Gen 1. We know from Gen 1:12-14 that on the third day plants were created. They got water as explained by 2:6. Rain did not exist at this time and will not come into being until Noah's time some 1000 years yet in the future. In 2:5 it says *neither wild plants or grains were growing on the earth*. The Hebrew word for *wild plants* is the same for *thorns and thistles* in Gen 3:18. The Hebrew word for *grain* means something that is the product of cultivation. In other words, the verse is telling us both these categories of plants, *wild plants* and *grains*, did not exist at the time of man's creation, because they were to depend on rain and the cultivation of the soil; both of which come after the fall (cultivation sooner than the rain!). So, Gen 2:5 is telling us when man was created, the plants of Gen 1:12-14 were in place, but the plant categories of "wild plants" and "grains" did not yet exist.

(As a side note, many years after the fall, rain will become an agent of God's judgement and blessing. He will either withhold or give too much of it in judgment, or He will give it in the right amount as blessing, all according to his Divine pleasure and will. We will see examples of this as the book of Genesis unfolds).

Vs 6, *but streams<sup>[b]</sup> came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.*

In verse 6 we get an explanation for how the plants did get water as the verse says streams came up. Some translations have mist, but this is confusing as the idea is not of a humid mist but rather of springs that naturally occur and water the earth. I think the best way to think of it is of a high water table with multiple springs and streams watering the earth's surface, and subterranean seepage allowing for below ground watering. In Northern Israel there is a spring called Banias that is a good example of what this must have been like. It is a spring that bursts forth from the surrounding dry ground and is surrounded by lush greenery.

In summary, the earth was fully planted when man was created and was watered by a network of springs, creeks, rivers, and subterranean seepage, but as vs 5 notes, it was without the broad categories of thorns and thistles and cultivated grains, which as we shall see, come after the fall.

So, think about man's environment. It was perfect. No weeds, no crops to plant or till, no rain, or lack thereof to worry about, food and water everywhere and available at any time. A nice pleasurable climate in which you did not have to wear clothes. It was a beautiful place.

*Vs 7, Then the Lord God formed a man<sup>[a]</sup> from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

So now in verse 7 we see man being created to live in this wonderful place. Note the creation of Adam comes in two stages,

The first stage is he is formed from the dust. The word used for *make* in Gen 1 is different than the word *formed* used here. In Gen 1 the Hebrew word for *make* emphasizes that the making is of God only—only He could do it. Here the word *formed* has the idea of molding. It is by exceptional design. It is a crafting (see Eph 2:10). It is the difference between me saying I made it and I specially designed or crafted it. As Ps 139:13-16 says, *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup> Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. <sup>15</sup> You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. <sup>16</sup> You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

Note too, man is made from the *dust of the ground*. Many other verses confirm this,

*Gen 3:19, By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.*

*Job 4:19, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust.*

*Is 29:16, You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "You did not make me"? Can the pot say to the potter, "You know nothing."*

*Rm 9:21, Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?*

The second stage is once made, God then breathes life into man. The same picture is expressed in Ez 37:1-10, *The Lord took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the Lord to a valley filled with bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around among the bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. <sup>3</sup> Then he asked me, "Son of man, can these bones become living people again?" "O Sovereign Lord," I replied, "you alone know the answer to that." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Speak a prophetic message to these bones and say, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord!' <sup>5</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and make you live again! <sup>6</sup> I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into*

*you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”<sup>7</sup> So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons.<sup>8</sup> Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.”<sup>10</sup> So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army.*

The Hebrew word for breath is ruach, which means wind or spirit. God takes the material part of man, all the elemental atoms that form the molecules that form the bones, muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, vessels, organs, brain, and skin of man, and then God imparts life. It is a transcendent act. Only with man does God breathe into him the life of His own image. Here in verse 7, God breathes into man and man becomes a *living being*. The Hebrew word for living being is nephesh which is better translated a living soul. Man is given a soul, an immaterial part that is in the image of God. A soul is your capacity to have,

1. Conscience, which means we are self-conscious beings. No other creature has this attribute.
2. A Will; we can make conscious decisions.
3. We therefore have Moral Agency. We are responsible for those decisions as they relate to external moral standards.
4. We have Emotions. We have the capacity to love and hate, to be merciful or spiteful, to be courageous or fearful, to be sad or joyful.
5. We have the ability to Think and Reason.
6. We can Create.
7. We are Relational.

These are all attributes that separate us from all other creatures and is part of the life God breathes into us.

This is why it is noteworthy to see how profound this concept of being made in God’s Image really is and the impact it has had on civilization. Because we are in God’s image, (the following edited with AI help!).

- a. Every life has worth and dignity just because they are human. This notion has provided the foundation for the existence of human rights, equality, justice, and the ongoing struggle against discrimination on the basis of sex or race. This idea ended slavery, and most recently abortion in many states. It is where the Enlightenment thinkers got the idea we were all equal as Thomas Jefferson so eloquently stated, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- b. It fostered the idea of the individual and selfhood; one who is a unique and independent moral agent, accountable to God, in contrast to the collectivist idea of tribe or clan.

- c. It provides a theological foundation for ethics and morality demanding compassion for the vulnerable, the weak and sick, the poor and those less fortunate. It gave rise to systems of justice and virtues such as generosity and mercy.
- d. It provides for political and societal order. It underlines the idea that political leaders are accountable to a higher power and must respect the dignity and worth of those they lead.
- e. Coupled with God's command to govern the earth and have dominion over it, it gives purpose and meaning to our existence. God gave us powers to create and work, hence we are to reflect his creative genius while stewarding and working with the materials we have around us.
- f. Because we share a common humanity, we can recognize and respect diversity, and not let it be divisive. This is true especially in the church as Paul made clear in Gal 3:28, *There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
- g. Most importantly, you being made in God's image, prompted Him to send His Son, the Lord Jesus, to become man, and willingly go to a cross and die for you, so he can save you from the sin we will find in Gen 3. Next week we will see God situate man in the Garden he made for Him.