

Man's First Home

Genesis 2:4-14

SS Lesson for 09/23/2018

Devotional Scripture: 1 Cor 15:40-49

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reveals how God provided for the needs of man and how man was created as God made and assigned **Man's First Home**. The **study's aim** is to acknowledge that God is the Creator of man and all of nature. The **study's application** is to take time to honor God who made us and gave us all things to enjoy.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gen 2:3

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

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

2:4a. This section (vv. 4-25), as indicated in verse 4a, 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). 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 *yāšar*, 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** (*‘ādām*, whence “Adam,” 2:20) is related to the word for **ground** (*‘ādāmāh*; 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 fellowshiping 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 (*kaššu* 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 (*nūah* "set to rest") **in the Garden... to work it** (*ābad*, "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 *šāwāh*, 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. Deuteronomy 30:11-20 set forth for Israel all the instructions parallel to the motifs of Genesis 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., Pss. 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 Genesis 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-kēn* (**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.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

I always love coming home. Whether it is at the end of a grueling day at work or after a trip, there is nothing like stepping through my own front door. The sights and smells of my house welcome me into its peacefulness, and I am reminded of what a sanctuary it is for my family and me. It is a place where we can come together and let the world melt away for a while—a private haven. With my family there to welcome me, I am completely content. When you think of home, what comes to mind? For each of us, home may look a little different. For one person, it may be a cottage set back from the road. For another, it is a stately house in the middle of town. For another, it is that little house in a quiet cul-de-sac. For Adam, the first home was something completely different. It was not a house somewhere. In fact, home was a garden. Eden was a lush paradise, teeming with life. There were streams of sweet-tasting water in it. Lush plants teemed with flowers, while trees stretched to the sky. Animals walked placidly through the foliage. It was an outdoor Utopia where man could live in harmony, delighting in its splendor. It was more than just a place, however. For Adam, home was also about who was there. You see, Eden was home to Adam because God

was there. Adam was able to walk right next to his Creator because God actually came down and walked in Eden (Gen. 3:8). Adam had direct, tangible access to Someone he loved dearly, just as you and I have with our families. Can you imagine that? Sadly, we live in a world much different, a world rapidly deteriorating. It is difficult to imagine a perfect world because none of us have seen it. Many philosophers and writers have speculated about what it would be like, and each of them has his own version. Our imaginations cannot come close to understanding it. Anything we think up fails to compare with God's original design. Why? Because God is infinitely wiser than we are (Isa. 55:8-9). It stands to reason that the world He created would go far beyond anything people could create. People can only create a flawed version of that world because they and all nature are flawed (cf. Rom. 8:20-22). The good news is that we will not eternally live in a world of decay. Someday, when Christ returns, He will set everything right again. When that happens, the curse of sin will be ended. Then everything and all of God's people will be set free from the decay of this current age. All nature waits eagerly for that day of redemption. As believers, we also know that we will one day be escorted into a new home (Revelation 21). In this home there is a place for each of us, prepared by Jesus Himself (John 14:2-3). Only in that day will we experience the world as God intended. Are you looking forward to that day? If you are like me, you can hardly wait! Until then, though, we need to be good stewards of this world and its creatures. We may not be able to repeal the curse, but we can do our best to care for what is here now.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

A World Made Ready for Man (Gen 2:4-6)

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.

Plans for the world (4-5)

God controls national plans (Ps 33:10-11)

10 The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. 11 But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

God controls the plans of the heart of man (Prov 16:1)

16 To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue.

God controls the success of plans (Prov 16:3)

3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

God controls the steps of man (Prov 16:9)

9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

God's purpose will always be done (Prov 19:21)

21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Even in the life and death of Jesus, God's plan was accomplished (Acts 2:22-23)

22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Watering of the world (6)

Watering that pours out over the face of the land (Amos 9:6)

6 he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land — the Lord is his name.

Watering through rain on the land (Ps 135:7)

7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Watering to bring forth grass (Job 38:25-27)

25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, 26 to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it, 27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?

Watering so the animals do not die of thirst (Isa 50:2)

2 When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst.

The Formation of Man (Gen 2:7)

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.

Formed from the dust of the earth (7)

All humans came from the dust (Eccl 3:20)

20 All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.

The first man, Adam, came from the dust of the earth (1 Cor 15:47)

47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.

The physical body will return to dust from which it came (Gen 3:19)

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

God remembers that man is just dust (Ps 103:14)

14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Man's spiritual body is like clay which can be molded by God (Isa 64:8)

8 Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Breathed the breath of life into man (7)

As long as we live God's breath of life is in our nostrils (Job 27:3)

3 as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils,

God's breath of life initiates life (Job 33:4)

4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

God's breath of life leaves upon death (Gen 7:22)

22 Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.

God's breath of life was given to the first man Adam (1 Cor 15:45)

45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

A Garden Home for Man (Gen 2:8-14)

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.

Provision of food (8-9)

Provision of food from the God who owns everything (Ps 50:10-15)

10 for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Provision of food through the power and pleasure of God (Jer 27:5)

5 With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please.

Provision of food from the One who supplies all needs (2 Cor 9:10-11)

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Provision of food that comes from the hands of God (1 Chron 29:12-14)

12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. 14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

God is the ultimate provider of all food (Ps 145:14-16)

14 The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. 16 You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Provision of knowledge (9)

Knowledge from the enrichment of God (1 Cor 1:5)

5 For in him you have been enriched in every way — in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—

Knowledge from the light of God in our hearts (2 Cor 4:6)

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Knowledge of insight to discern what is best and pure (Phil 1:9-11)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.

Knowledge of the mystery of God (Col 2:2-3)

2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Knowledge that is renewed by God (Col 3:9-10)

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Distribution of water (10-14)

Distributed water that pours down into the ravines (Ps 104:10-12)

10 He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. 11 They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Distributed water that comes from upper chambers to satisfy the earth (Ps 104:13)

13 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

Distributed water that comes down from the clouds supplying rain (Ps 147:8)

8 He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.

Distributed water that well waters the gardens of the earth (Gen 13:10)

10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Man's Duty (2:4-17)

While Genesis 1 describes a progression from chaos to cosmos, or disorder to order, chapter two follows a different pattern. Perhaps the literary thread which runs throughout the passage is that of God's creative activity in supplying those things which are deficient.

Verse 4 serves as an introduction to the remaining verses. Verse 5 informs us of the deficiencies which are supplied in verses 6-17: No shrub, no plant, no rain, and no man. These are satisfied by the mist (verse 6) and the rivers (verses 10-14), the man (verse 7), and the garden (verses 8-9).

The deficiency of verses 18-25 is, simply stated, "no helper suitable for Adam" (cf. verses 18,20). This helper is provided in a beautiful way in the last part of chapter 2.

Again, let me emphasize that Moses goes not intend to give us a chronological order of events here, but a logical one. His purpose is to more particularly describe the creation of man, his wife, and the setting into which they are put. These become key factors in the fall which occurs in chapter 3.

While as yet no rain had ever fallen, God provided the water which was needed for plant life. "But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground" (Genesis 2:6).

There is some discussion over this word 'mist' ('*ed*'). It could mean a mist or a fog, as some contend. The Septuagint used the Greek word *pege*, which means 'spring.' Some have understood the Hebrew word as being derived from a Sumerian word, referring to subterranean waters. It may be that springs flowed out of the ground

and that vegetation was perhaps watered by irrigation or channels. This could even explain, in part, the work of Adam in keeping the garden.

The water being supplied, God created the garden, which was to be the place of man's abode, and the object of his attention. It was well-supplied with many trees which provided both beauty and food.

And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).

Specifically, two trees are mentioned, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This latter tree was the only thing forbidden man.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die' (Genesis 2:16-17).

It is interesting that seemingly Adam, alone, is told by God that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil must not be eaten. One can only conjecture as to how effectively God's command to Adam was communicated to Eve. Could this explain Eve's inaccurate appraisal in 3:2-3?

Into this paradise, man was placed. While he was surely to enjoy this wonderland, he was also to cultivate it. Look again at verse 5:

Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground (Genesis 2:5).

When placed in the garden, Adam was to work there: "Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

Adam's creation is described more fully in 2:7 than in chapter one. He was formed from the dust of the ground. While this is a humbling fact, it is also obvious that man's origin is not from the animal world, nor is man created in the same way as the animals. In part, Adam's dignity stems from the fact that his life breath is the inspiration of God (verse 7).

Here was no mythical garden. Every part of the description of this paradise inclines us to understand that it was a real garden in a particular geographical location. Specific points of reference are given. Four rivers are named, two of which are known to us today. We should not be surprised, especially after the cataclysmic event of the flood, that changes may have occurred, which would make it impossible to locate this spot precisely.

I find it most interesting that the Paradise of Eden was a place somewhat different from what we envision today. First of all, it was a place of work. Men today dream of paradise as a hammock suspended between two coconut trees on some desert island, where work is never again to be contemplated. Furthermore, heaven is thought of as the end of all prohibitions. Heaven is frequently confused with hedonism. It is very self-centered and pleasure-oriented. While Adam's state was one of beauty and bliss, it cannot be thought of as unrestricted pleasure. The forbidden fruit is a part of Paradise, too. Heaven is not the experiencing of every desire, but the satisfaction of beneficial and wholesome desires.

Servanthood is not a new concept in the New Testament. Meaningful service provides fulfillment and purpose for life. God described Israel as a cultivated garden, a vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-2ff.). Jesus spoke of Himself as the Vine and we as the branches. The Father tenderly cared for His vineyard (John 15:1ff.). Paul described the ministry as the work of a farmer (II Timothy 2:6).

While the church of the New Testament may be better described as a flock, nevertheless the image of the garden is not inappropriate. There is a work to be done for the child of God. And that work is no drudgery, no duty to begrudgingly carry out. It is a source of joy and fulfillment. Many today have no real sense of meaning and purpose because they are not doing the work that God has designed for them to carry out.

(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-meaning-man-his-duty-and-his-delight-genesis-126-31-24-25>)

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. God constantly reveals Himself so that all may know Him through His works (Gen. 2:4)
2. There is no void that God cannot fill and no barren place where God cannot bring life (vss. 5-6)
3. God's Spirit gives us life, and He gives that life its significance (vs. 7)
4. God teaches us by example in His creation, even as He provides for man's needs (vs. 8)
5. In a world filled with enticements and options, we honor God by choosing Him daily (vs. 9)
6. When we appreciate the beauty of the earth, we glorify our God, who created it (vss. 10-14)