

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 2

GENESIS 2:1-3 - CREATION CONCLUDED

ESV STUDY BIBLE: "THESE VERSES BRING TO A CONCLUSION THE OPENING SECTION OF GENESIS BY EMPHASIZING THAT GOD HAS COMPLETED THE PROCESS OF ORDERING CREATION. THE REPEATED COMMENT THAT GOD **RESTED** DOES NOT IMPLY THAT HE WAS WEARY FROM LABOR. THE EFFORTLESS EASE WITH WHICH EVERYTHING IS DONE IN CH. 1 SUGGESTS OTHERWISE. RATHER, THE MOTIF OF GOD'S RESTING HINTS AT THE PURPOSE OF CREATION. AS REFLECTED IN VARIOUS ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ACCOUNTS, DIVINE REST IS ASSOCIATED WITH TEMPLE BUILDING. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE EARTH IS THAT IT SHOULD BECOME HIS DWELLING PLACE; IT IS NOT SIMPLY MADE TO HOUSE HIS CREATURES."

THE SEVENTH DAY WAS A DAY OF "REST" NOT EXPLICITLY A DAY OF WORSHIP, FOR EVERY DAY WAS DESIGNED TO BE A DAY OF WORSHIP AND ADORATION OF GOD.

GENESIS 2:4-7 - CREATION STORY RETOLD

WE WILL NOTICE THAT WE NOW BEGIN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SECONDARY TELLING OF THE CREATION STORY. THIS ISN'T A CONTRACTIONARY VERSION, BUT INSTEAD A RETELLING OF THE DETAILS WITH THE FOCUS ON HUMANS, GOD'S CENTRAL FOCUS OF CREATION. CHAPTER 1 WAS A DETAILED AND ORDERED LIST AND CHAPTER 2 IS GOING TO ELABORATE ON MORE OF THE INTIMATE DETAILS OF THE CREATION OF HUMANITY WHICH CHAPTER 1 DID NOT SPEAK OF.

GENESIS 1 PRESENTS A CREATOR GOD WHO IS POWERFUL AND GETS THINGS DONE AND GENESIS 2 SHOWS US THAT THIS SAME GOD IS PERSONAL AND RELATIONAL.

GENESIS 2:7 - MAN BECOMES A LIVING BEING

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT VERSE TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE'S TEACHING ON HUMANS. GOD FORMS MAN FROM THE "DUST OF THE GROUND" AND BREATHED INTO HIM "THE BREATH OF LIFE" WHICH LEADS TO MAN BECOMING A "LIVING BEING." THIS WORD "BEING" HAS OFTEN BEEN TRANSLATED AS "SOUL" (EX: KJV) AND IT IS THE HEBREW WORD "*NEPHESH*". BEFORE GOD BREATHED THE "BREATH OF LIFE" INTO MAN, HE WAS NOT A "LIVING" BEING/SOUL BUT JUST A BEING/SOUL. WHAT MADE MAN ALIVE WAS THE "BREATH OF LIFE" AND WHAT WILL KEEP HIM ALIVE WILL BE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS ACCESS TO THE TREE OF LIFE.

WE WILL SEE IN GENESIS 3 THAT WHEN ADAM AND EVE ARE BANISHED FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN, GOD WILL GUARD THE TREE OF LIFE SO THAT HUMANS WILL NOT HAVE ACCESS TO IT - FOR IF THEY CONTINUED TO EAT FROM IT, THEY WOULD LIVE FOREVER:

GENESIS 3:22 - THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, "BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL; AND NOW, HE MIGHT STRETCH OUT HIS HAND, AND TAKE ALSO FROM THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EAT, AND LIVE FOREVER"

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THIS NOW IN LIGHT OF GENESIS 2:7 BECAUSE SCRIPTURE'S TESTIMONY OF HUMANS IS THAT IMMORTALITY IS BASED ON SOMETHING *OUTSIDE* OF THEM, RATHER THAN *WITHIN* THEM. THE HEBREW PERSPECTIVE ON THE NATURE OF

HUMANS IS THAT THEY *ARE* "SOULS" IN NEED OF GOD'S GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE AS OPPOSED TO THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY PERSPECTIVE WHICH TEACHES THEY HUMANS *HAVE* "SOULS" WHICH ARE IMMORTAL THEMSELVES.

IF HUMANS LIVED FOREVER BECAUSE OF SOMETHING INNATE WITHIN THEM, THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR SALVATION AND THE "GIFT" OF ETERNAL LIFE FROM GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST (ROMANS 6.23). THE BIBLE'S TEACHING ON LIFE AND DEATH AND ETERNAL LIFE AND ETERNAL DEATH AND THE NATURE OF MAN IS OFTEN IGNORED AND POPULAR CULTURE AND MYTHOLOGY HAS BEEN EMBRACED BY MANY. THUS A REMINDER OF HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ROOT OUR UNDERSTANDING AND BELIEF IN THE WORDS OF GOD FOUND IN SCRIPTURE.

GENESIS 2:8-9 - GARDENS & TREES

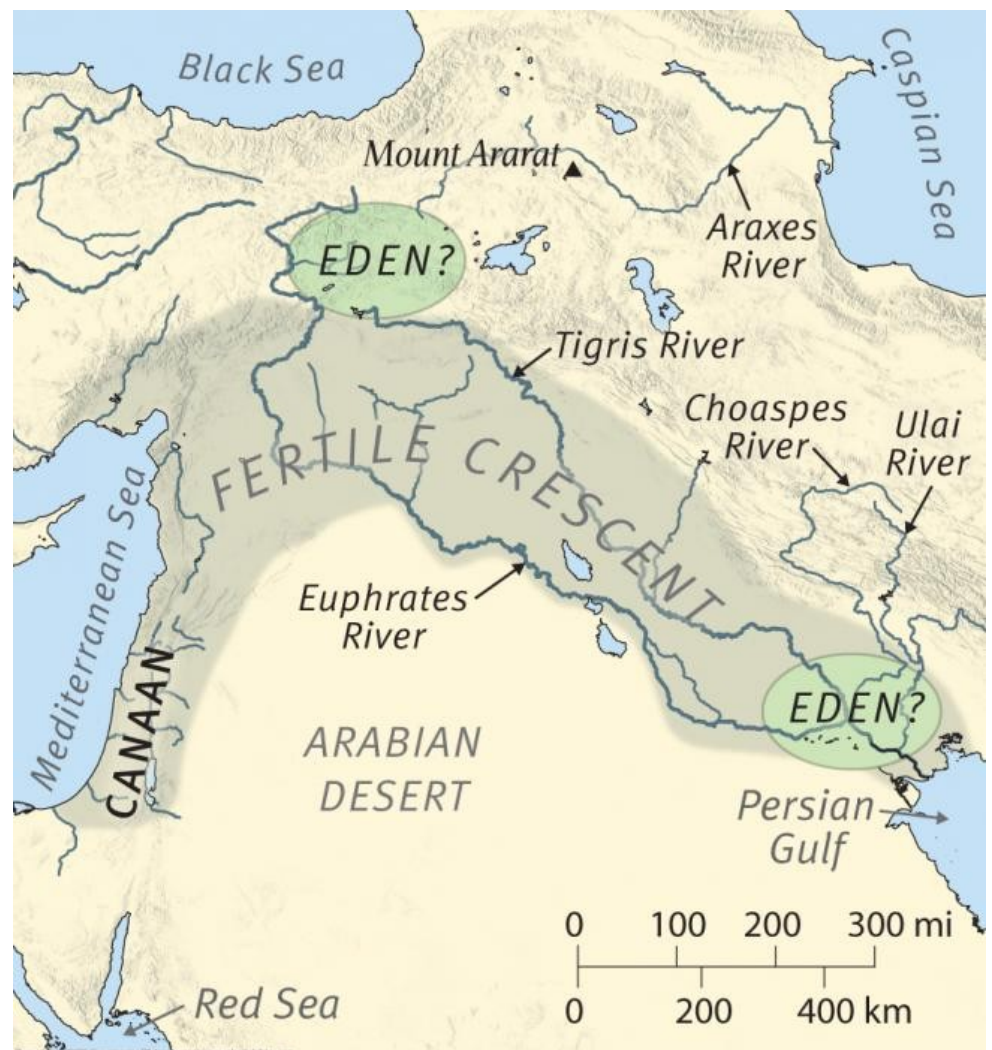
GOD CREATED THE ENTIRE PLANET BUT PLACED THE MAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. "EDEN" MEANS "PLEASURE". THE GREEK VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT USES A WORD THAT FORMED OUR ENGLISH WORD "PARADISE." WE SEE THAT THE GARDEN WAS FILLED WITH GOOD AND PLEASURABLE THINGS WITH THE "TREE OF LIFE" IN THE CENTER. WE WILL LEARN THAT IT IS THE FRUIT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE WHICH WILL GIVE HUMANS IMMORTALITY AND THE FRUIT FROM THE TREE OF THE "KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL" WHICH WILL LEAD TO THEIR DEMISE.

GENESIS 2:10-14 - LOCATION OF GARDEN OF EDEN

WATER IS AGAIN A NOTABLE PART OF THIS EARLY CREATION, IN THIS CASE A RIVER (AND SET OF RIVERS) WHICH FLOW FROM THE GARDEN TO WATER IT. THESE RIVERS (ESPECIALLY THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES) HELP TO GIVE SOME UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHERE THE GARDEN MAY HAVE BEEN LOCATED. IT IS IN THE REGION OF THE WORLD WE NOW CALL THE "MIDDLE EAST" AND NEAR IRAQ/IRAN/SYRIA/TURKEY. THIS REGION WILL BECOME THE MAIN SETTING FOR THE BIBLICAL STORY AND HISTORY OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION.

GENESIS 2:15-17 - RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAN

GOD GIVES MAN A RESPONSIBILITY ON THE EARTH - TO CULTIVATE AND KEEP THE GARDEN. CULTIVATE MEANS TO "WORK" AND "KEEP" MEANS TO WATCH OR PRESERVE. SO MAN WAS TO WORK THE LAND AND STEWARD THE LAND. THIS IS A FULL TIME JOB - YET, THIS CALLING TO



KEEP THE GARDEN WAS PART OF GOD'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD, MEANING "WORK" WASN'T A DRAG, BURDEN OR CURSE - BUT A PART OF THE VERY GOOD/BLESSED CREATIVE ORDER!

THE ADDITIONAL COMMAND GOD GIVES IS A PRETTY IMPORTANT ONE. MAN IS TOLD HE CAN EAT FROM ANY AND ALL OF THE TREES OF THE GARDEN WITH THE ONE GLARING EXCEPTION OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. IF HE EATS FROM THAT TREE, HE WILL DIE.

THIS SEEMS LIKE AN ODD CONCLUSION TO THE CREATION STORY WHICH SEEMED TO BE ABOUT GOODNESS AND PLEASURE AND ENJOYMENT. BUT THE INCLUSION OF THIS STIPULATION IS ACTUALLY PRETTY IMPORTANT TO HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BASED ON GOODNESS, PLEASURE AND ENJOYMENT.

IF MAN HAD NO CHOICE TO BUT TO ONLY LIVE FOR GOD, THAT MAY SEEM LIKE A GOOD THING, BUT THAT IS A RELATIONSHIP (EVEN A GOOD ONE) BASED ON COMPULSION AND NOT CHOICE. MAN WAS CREATED AND THEN FORCED TO ONLY LIVE FOR AND ENJOY GOD AND HIS CREATION. THE PRESENCE OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL PROVIDED AN ALTERNATIVE OPTION TO HUMANS OTHER THAN CHOOSING GOD. THIS OPTION WAS A BAD ONE CLEARLY AND THE CHOICE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A NO-BRAINER. BUT THIS OPTION WAS IMPORTANT TO DEFINE THE TERMS OF GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANITY.

GOD WANTED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANS TO BE BASED ON FREE CHOICE RATHER THAN FORCE. EVERY TIME MAN CHOSE GOD RATHER THAN THE FORBIDDEN TREE, HE DID SO OUT OF LOVE AND FREEDOM. THUS THE "CHOICE" TO CHOOSE TO LOVE AND OBEY GOD WAS A POWERFUL INDICATION ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND PEOPLE. ALLOWING SOMEONE TO CHOOSE TO LOVE YOU RATHER THAN FORCING SOMEONE TO LOVE YOU IS ACTUALLY ONE OF THE MAIN DISTINCTIONS OF LOVE.

AND THIS IS WHY GOD GAVE THIS TREE. YES THERE WAS THE RISK OF HUMANS MESSING EVERYTHING UP, BUT THAT WAS A RISK GOD WAS WILLING TO TAKE. HE WANTED HUMANS TO CHOOSE HIM BECAUSE THEY LOVED HIM, NOT BECAUSE HE WAS THEIR ONLY OPTION.

GENESIS 2:18-24 - A HELPER FOR MAN

MAN GETS TO NAME ALL OF THE ANIMALS (THAT'S COOL!). THIS JOB ACTUALLY GIVES US SOME INSIGHT INTO ADAM BEING THE "IMAGE OF GOD" (GENESIS 1:26-27) FOR NOW ADAM (THE CREATION) IS BRINGING ORDER TO THE WORLD AS GOD (THE CREATOR) DID IN CHAPTER 1. HE'S NAMING, DISTINGUISHING MALE AND FEMALE, AND SORTING DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF SPECIES.

AND AS HE OBSERVES ALL OF THE ANIMALS, THERE IS A REALIZATION THAT MAN WAS WITHOUT A HELPER FOR THIS GREAT TASK OF STEWARDING THE CREATION. AND SO HERE GENESIS 2:18 GIVES US OUR FIRST "NOT GOOD" - IT IS NOT GOOD THAT ADAM IS ALONE. YOU CAN IMAGINE THE MANY ANIMALS (MALE AND FEMALE) PASS BY AND YET THE MAN REALIZES THAT HE'S BY HIMSELF.

GOD WILL THEN CREATE A SECOND HUMAN (A WOMAN) FROM PART OF ADAM ILLUSTRATING THEIR INTERCONNECTEDNESS. MAN AND WOMAN WILL BE COMPANIONS ON THE EARTH, HELPERS, UNTIED IN THEIR LIVES AND SERVICE OF GOD. THIS IS PART OF THE "VERY GOOD" CREATION OF GOD, AND ACTUALLY ONE PLACE THAT GOD WANTED ADAM TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE GOD MAKING SOMETHING "NOT GOOD", GOOD.

V. 24 - GOD INSTITUTED THE FUTURE UNDERSTANDING AND MODEL OF "MARRIAGE" BASED ON THIS CREATION ACCOUNT. MARRIAGE, LIKE WORK, WAS SOMETHING GOD WANTED AND INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED.

GENESIS 2:25 - NAKED & UNASHAMED

CLEARLY THINGS IN THIS TIME ARE UNLIKE THEY ARE NOW. THE CONCLUSION OF THIS ACCOUNT WITH THIS DESCRIPTION TEACHES US THAT NOT ONLY WERE THE PHYSICAL ELEMENTS OF CREATION IN GOOD AND WORKING ORDER AS GOD DESIGNED, BUT THE EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS WERE "VERY GOOD" AS WELL.

THE CREATION ACCOUNT IS FOUNDATIONAL IN SO MANY WAYS - NOT ONLY DOES IT HELP US UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE BIG QUESTIONS OF LIFE ("WHERE DID WE COME FROM", "HOW DID THE UNIVERSE COME INTO EXISTENCE", ETC) BUT IT ALSO HELPS US UNDERSTAND THE BIGGEST QUESTION OF LIFE - WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE? THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS SECTION SHOULDN'T JUST BE THE PURPOSE OF THE SUN OR FRUIT TREES, BUT THE UNDERSTANDING THAT HUMANS WERE CREATED TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THEIR GOD - BASED ON LOVING CHOICE. GOD CHOSE TO CREATE HUMANS, AND HUMANS ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE TO LOVE HIM.

WE MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION ABOVE ABOUT HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND GOD'S HEART TOWARDS HUMANS:

YES THERE WAS THE RISK OF HUMANS MESSING EVERYTHING UP, BUT THAT WAS A RISK GOD WAS WILLING TO TAKE. HE WANTED HUMANS TO CHOOSE HIM BECAUSE THEY LOVED HIM, NOT BECAUSE HE WAS THEIR ONLY OPTION.

IT IS THE SAME TODAY. GOD HAS CHOSEN TO CREATE YOU AND GIVE YOU LIFE AND THE CHANCE TO KNOW HIM. AND HE ALSO GIVES US THE CHANCE TO *NOT* CHOOSE HIM. YET ONE CHOICE LEADS TO LIFE AND OTHER OTHER LEADS TO DEATH. BUT GOD LETS US MAKE THIS CHOICE BECAUSE HE ISN'T JUST LOOKING TO RULE OVER THE CREATION HE MADE, BUT BECAUSE HE WANTS RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT CREATION. RISK FOR HIM, BUT WITH A GREAT REWARD FOR US.