

Genesis 2 - Adam & Eve - The First Parents

Reading: Genesis 2:4-9 and 15-24

Well, in 1916, Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company declared history to be “bunk”, But you know without the history found in the book Genesis, which is foundational to the rest of scripture, we would struggle to realise who we are, why we’re here and what our purpose is.

Following on from Jon’s talk last week about God’s creation of the world, we see the second chapter of Genesis starting with the seventh day which, we are told in verse 3, the Lord God declared a day of rest “from all his work that he had done in creation”. We then come to verses 4-9 where we are introduced to Adam.

Now, according to Wayne Grudem in his book Systematic Theology, “God did not need to create man, yet he created us for his own glory”. And you know the more we study the Bible the more we realise that God didn’t need to do any of the things that he did and still does but the conclusion we always reach is that because He loves us, he provides for us and we in turn are expected to live our lives to the glory of God our creator.

Looking back to the first chapter of Genesis, in verses 26 & 27 God said “let us make man in our image after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”. The creation of man was, therefore, different from the rest of the animal creation in that man was clearly stated to be created uniquely in the image of God himself. We are made in the likeness of God to have the capacity of and responsibility to be co-workers with Him and act as stewards of his creation.

And so, from the dust of the ground God creates Adam, breathes life into him, and sets him apart from the animals. We’re then told that God gives Adam the responsibility of cultivating that land that he’s created.

We are then given details in verses 10-14 just how beautiful Eden and particularly the garden in which Adam is placed was: verse 10 tells of the river; verse 11 of gold; verse 13 of bdellium and onyx and of course all the trees, including the tree of life and the tree of good and evil, other plants and living creatures the creation of which we saw in Chapter 1.

And It’s worth taking time to think about where Adam’s placed - It’s in a beautiful and perfect garden in Eden where he lives in perfect communion with God. And so, Genesis 2 takes us back to our Creator and shows us how God has designed things to be, which is to live in perfect communion with God, as co-workers who are dependent on him.

So, Adam, as the pinnacle of God’s creation has been placed in a perfect paradise and has been given dominion over every plant and animal.

Well then in verses 16 & 17 we're told that God commands "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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". Now that doesn't sound like a difficult rule or commandment to follow does it? God has provided everything that Adam and we need but we must obey, honour, serve and submit to Him if we are to truly live a life "in all its fullness" as John talks about in chapter 10 verse 10 of his gospel.

After all the wonder that God has so far created and which he has seen as good or very good, we now, in verse 18 read that he says something is "not good". He says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him". God then brings every living creature to Adam to be named but there's not a suitable helper found amongst them.

We then see the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam and Adam's response in verse 23 "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". The final two verses of this chapter read "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed".

Now, let's look into this can of worms! Living in the modern world many people might balk at the terminology and inference of these two short verses, but it is important to realise that what we see here is the perfect creation of Adam and Eve with God's plan for marriage which is the bearing of children and the stewardship of the rest of creation.

Now of course we mustn't fall into the trap of assuming that because Eve came second and was seen as a "suitable helper" for Adam that God intended her to be of less importance or as a woman to be completely subservient to her male partner. We only have to look at the Trinity to know that the son submits to the father and the spirit submits to the son and the father; it simply means that they have different roles. So, it is with Adam and Eve and with every couple. Mathew Henry says this "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor 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". And of course, without Eve, Adam would be incomplete. Again, we mustn't take it that no-one must remain single and all have to marry - we know, don't we, that Jesus himself was single; we are merely told of God's design of marriage and what it should look like.

And so, picking up on the theme of marriage in his letter to the Ephesians, although Paul the Apostle says that a wife should submit to her husband and that the husband is the head of the household, he also says that husbands are to love and respect their wives as Christ loves the church and gave his life for it. And in Paul's letters we often read that we all have different roles to play and that each is as important as the next, but the vital thing to remember is that all our roles are carried out to the glory of God in service and obedience to him.

So, we see here, back in the Garden of Eden, God's perfect creation of the human race, living according to God's model of a perfect marriage, in perfect surroundings with everything they need and no sense of shame, a great responsibility and commandment to live up to. As one theologian puts it "God owes them nothing but has given them everything including each other". What could possibly go wrong?

Well of course we know, don't we, that like ourselves, Adam and Eve were only human with all the temptations and "I'm sure it'll be ok if" attitude that we often have. Jon will look at the result of this next week when he looks at Genesis Chapter 3.

For now, let us look at Chapter 2 verse 21 where Eve was created and listen to the words of that verse which say "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man". Can we read this and not be reminded of the crucifixion and what that means to us? Wasn't Christ put into a deep sleep but in his case, death and didn't his side get pierced by the guards? and weren't we given the chance of new birth in him as a result of what he did for us? Our saviour, the second Adam died for us so that we may have what was intended for the children of that first Adam - so we see a full circle and one for which we should give thanks and praise to a God who didn't need to give us anything but has given us everything.

Amen