

Genesis 2:4-17 – Man in The Garden Temple

Context: This is not another creation or an account of creation compiled by another writer and added to the text. This is a focusing in on the creation of man. Chapter one summarized the entirety of creation. Chapter two gives us specific details centering on the creation of Man. Chapter two sets the stage for the fall into sin, which expresses the purpose of the rest of Scripture.

I. The Creation of Man (4-7)

A. Literary Introduction (4)

1. The introduction to the first “toledoth” (i.e. generations) section in Genesis
 - a. There are ten of these sections in Genesis (some list 12)
 - b. This section lasts through chapter 4
2. This “toledoth” section shows what happens to the creation (i.e. how sin and death enter and their effect on Adam’s family)

B. The State of Earth Before Man (5-6)

NOTE: These are very difficult verses

1. Some Plants Had Not Yet Grown (5a)
 - a. Several different interpretations are possible
 - b. Some say these verses look ahead to the fall
 - i. Technical arguments are made from the words used (the word “plants” is not the same as in Genesis 1) to show that the plants are those containing thorns
 - ii. The “herbs” of the field is the same word used in Genesis one for grass and vegetation, but “of the field” shows that they are those that come from cultivation (i.e. the labor and toil of the fall)
 - iii. Moses’ readers would be familiar with the fallen state and needed to hear that creation wasn’t always like this
 - c. Some say these verses speak of growth after the initial creation
 - i. The plants weren’t producing in abundance because there was no rain and no man to work the ground
 - ii. The text assumes that there was already vegetation – if there was none created, rain and cultivation wouldn’t have made any difference
 - d. Most likely – The text is speaking of cultivated plants here rather than those that reproduce by seed alone in the wild. Until man was created cultivated plants (i.e. of the field) were not there.
2. The Reason For the Lack of Plants (5b-6)
 - a. The Lord had not yet sent rain

- b. There was no man to cultivate the ground
- c. A mist (spring? – Hebrew: מַטָּר) watered the whole surface
 - i. We don't know the exact nature of this word
 - ii. Only other use is in Job 36:27 –
 - iii. Possibilities
 - i. Mist, stream, spring, underground spring, the overflow of flooded rivers
 - ii. Many have made different cases, but we simply don't know – the point is that man is not there to cultivate and the Lord watered the entirety of the ground

3. The Creation is incomplete until Man is Formed

C. God Forms Man (7)

1. Notice the change in God's name – This is the first time He is called Yahweh Elohim
 - a. Yahweh is God's covenant name ("I Am" in Exodus 3)
 - b. Exodus 6:2-4 - And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them
 - i. In Exodus 6:2-4, the words Lord and Jehovah are both translations of Yahweh – God's covenant name
 - ii. In the KJV Old Testament, when you see the word LORD (in all Caps) it is a translation of Yahweh, the covenant name of God. When the first letter of Lord is capitalized only, it is the word Adonai (meaning lord or master)
2. God forms him from the dust of the ground
 - a. Adam (man) is made from the adamah (ground)
 - b. Man is bound to the ground as God's image and vice-regent
3. God breathes the breath of life into him
 - a. The Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה (néshamah, "breath") is used for God and for the life imparted to humans, not animals. Ruach is used for animals
 - i. This breath brings spiritual understanding (see Job 32:8)
 - ii. This breath brings conscience (Proverbs 20:27)
 - b. Could this be part of what the "image of God" means?
4. Man becomes a living soul

II. The Garden In Eden (8-14)

- A. God places Adam in the Garden (8)
 - 1. God plants a garden in Eden
 - a. Here it says this garden was IN Eden – (but there are other places that call it the garden of Eden – see Gen. 2:15; 3:23-24)
 - i. Garden here isn't like the garden in your backyard
 - ii. It is more like what we would call a botanical garden (some translations say orchard)
 - b. The word עֵדֶן Eden – probably means delight or pleasure – The word is used in 2 Sam. 1:24 and Jer. 51:34
 - c. In the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT – which the apostles quote throughout the New Testament) the word garden is the word παράδεισος (paradise) – we will see this “paradise” again described in Revelation.
 - 2. God places the man in the garden
- B. The Description of The Trees (9)
 - 1. God provides an abundance of trees
 - a. They are pleasing to the sight
 - b. They are good for food
 - c. God provides everything the man could possibly need – Adam and Eve will focus on what they are deprived of, but God has not held back any good thing from them
 - 2. God places the Tree of Life there
 - a. Tree of life is the promise of eternal life
 - b. Eating of the tree of life would perpetually give Adam life
 - i. This life is granted by God not by some property inside the fruit
 - ii. It is part of the testing of Adam – If Adam obeys he will be given eternal life in the garden of God
 - iii. We will see the tree of life again at the end of the story in Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19, as Jesus fulfills the covenant that Adam breaks
 - 3. God places the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil there
 - a. This is not just “knowing” in the sense of being able to make moral choices. Adam and Eve are expected to obey God's command.
 - b. This tree will indeed convey the “knowledge” of good and evil when they eat from it – but the point is that they choose wisdom independent from God. They do not trust and obey God and depend on Him for their knowledge, instead they attempt to subvert God.

- c. Adam is experientially innocent before eating from the tree. (They don't know they are naked). The only other time "knowing" good and evil is used without prepositions is in Deut. 1:39 as God speaks of Israel's innocent children
 - i. Deut. 1:39 - Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.
 - ii. The tree represents a probation period in which Adam will choose whether he will trust and obey or whether he will try to be Lord himself.

C. The Description of the Waters (10-14)

- 1. A single river watered the garden then divided into four (10)
- 2. The Divisions of the River (11-14)
 - a. The first river – Pishon
 - i. Flows around Havilah
 - ii. There is gold there
 - iii. There are many precious stones there
 - b. The second river – Gihon
 - i. Flows around the land of Cush
 - c. The third river – Tigris – east of Assyria
 - d. The fourth river – Euphrates

III. Man's Role in the Garden (15-17)

A. The Man as a Priest-King (15)

- 1. We have already seen in Chapter 1 that Man is to be God's regent having dominion over creation
- 2. Here man is given the task of dressing and keeping the garden (these are also translated to work and guard, i.e. keep)
 - a. The Hebrew verbs *'abad* to serve, till, and *shamar* – to keep, guard are found in combination elsewhere in the Pentateuch only in passages that describe the duties of the Levites in the sanctuary (See Num. 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6) – T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden To The New Jerusalem*, 22
 - b. The two words are also used together to describe the duties of the priests in the Temple (1 Chron. 23:32; Ezekiel 44:14)

B. The Man is Abundantly provided for (16)

- 1. God gives man the freedom to eat any tree in the garden
- 2. God uses a Semitic colloquialism expressing certainty – He says "Eating you will eat" which is translated "freely eat"

C. The Man is Under Covenant Stipulation (17)

- 1. Man is also given a command to refrain from eating from one tree

2. He is given the same formula of certainty – In the day that he eats of it – “Dying you will die.” (i.e. surely)
3. Man is given the covenant by which he will either receive life from God, or death.

The Case For Eden As A Temple Of God

1. Just as the temple was the place of God’s unique presence experienced by the priests, so Eden was the place where God walked with Adam. G.K. Beale notes, “The same Hebrew verbal form (Hithpael) used for God’s “walking back and forth” in the garden (Gen. 3:8) also describes God’s presence in the tabernacle (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14 [23:15 MT]; 2 Sam. 7:6–7; Ezek. 28:14).”[6]
2. Adam is depicted as a priest with respect to his task, namely, “to work” (עָבַד) and “to keep” (שָׁמַר) the garden, which is the priest’s task in the temple (Num. 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chron. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14).[7] Adam also donned priestly attire (Ezek. 28:13ff.).
3. The cherubim assumed Adam’s function to guard the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), which became memorialized in the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 25:18–22).
4. The “tree of life” (Gen. 2:9) was probably a model of the lampstand in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:31ff).[8]
5. Israel’s tabernacle and temple had wood carvings that gave it a garden-like ambiance (1 Kings 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18–20).
6. Just as the entrance to Israel’s later temple was to face east and be on a mountain, and just as the end-time temple of Ezekiel was to face east (Ezek. 40:6) and be on a mountain (Ezek. 40:2; 43:12), so the entrance to Eden faced east (Gen. 3:24) and was situated on a mountain (Ezek. 28:14–16).
7. The ark, which contained the law, in the Holy of Holies echoed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as both lead to wisdom.
8. As a river flowed out from Eden (Gen. 2:10), so a river flows from the eschatological temple (Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 21:1–2; cf. Ps. 36:8–9; Rev. 22:1–2).
9. Just as gold and onyx are in the garden (Gen. 2:11–12), so they are used to decorate the later sanctuaries and priestly garments (Exod. 25:7, 11, 17, 31).
10. Just as the temple had a tripartite structure of concentric circles of holiness (Holy of Holies > Holy Place > Courtyard), so the garden of Eden had the same (Eden > Garden > Outer World).
11. Ezekiel refers to “Eden, the garden of God... the holy mountain of God” and also alludes to it containing “sanctuaries” (28:18; cf. 7:24; Lev. 21:23; Jer. 51:51).
12. Just as the climax and purpose of creation was rest (Gen. 2:1–3), so the construction of the tabernacle culminates with rest (Exod. 31:12–17).

We will also see that the New Jerusalem in Revelation is a restoration of the garden presented in Genesis. There is a river flowing out from it (Rev. 22:1), the tree of life is there (22:2). It is adorned with all manner of precious stones (21:18–21) as is the region of the garden (Gen. 2:11–12). Also, the city is described as a perfect square (Rev. 21:16) just as the Holy of Holies in the Temple (1 Kings 6:20).