

# MAN IN EDEN

## Genesis 2:4-17

### INTRODUCTION

- “Who Do You Think You Are?” is the name of a documentary series that traces the ancestry of famous people
- Some have discovered criminals, even murderers in their ancestry
- Others have found they descended from royalty
- One man, Matthew Pinsent, traced his ancestry all the way back to Adam
- He said: “I was hoping to find a rogue in the family, but instead I was connected to the Creator”
- People research their ancestry to gain a deeper sense of themselves, where they came from, what makes them who they are
- How positively true is this when it comes to learning of our first father, Adam!
- The more we understand of Adam, his creation, his responsibilities, his fall and his redemption, the more we will understand of ourselves and our purpose in this world
- When we read in chapter 1 the very brief account of man’s creation, it prompts a number of questions
  - ✓ How did God create man? From nothing or from already existing matter?
  - ✓ Were man and woman created in the same moment in the same manner?
  - ✓ What was the man’s name? What was the woman’s name?
  - ✓ Was the man a fully developed adult? Did he possess intelligence and the ability to speak?
  - ✓ What location on earth did God place man? What was the environment they dwelt in?
  - ✓ What responsibilities did God give man?
- All these questions are answered in chapter 2

- Some infidels imagine there is a contradiction between Genesis 1 and 2
- They point out apparent differences in order of creation, as well as a change in style
- But these two chapters are intended to be complementary
- Chapter 1 looks at the creation week generally, while chapter 2 looks at day six as it specifically relates to man in the garden of Eden
- Note in v.4 is the phrase “generations of the heavens and of the earth”
- A recurring phrase in Genesis is “the generations of” which is the Hebrew word *toledoth* marking 10 divisions in the book
  - ✓ The generations of the heavens and the earth (2:4)
  - ✓ The generations of Adam (5:1)
  - ✓ The generations of Noah (6:9)
  - ✓ The generations of the sons of Noah (10:1)
  - ✓ The generations of Shem (11:10)
  - ✓ The generations of Terah (11:27)
  - ✓ The generations of Ishmael (25:12)
  - ✓ The generations of Isaac (25:19)
  - ✓ The generations of Esau (36:1,9)
  - ✓ The generations of Jacob (37:2)
- When compared with other ancient historical writings, it has been suggested that these *toledoths* may be signatures of the individuals named, at the completion of their record
- Later, when Moses wrote Genesis, he may have used these records to complete the book
- In 2:4 we are introduced to a new name of God LORD God (*Jehovah Elohim*)
  - ✓ Up to 2:3 the name for God is *Elohim* (35 times)
  - ✓ From 2:4-3:24 LORD God (*Jehovah Elohim*) is used 20 times
- Elohim highlights God’s power and transcendence over the creation, while Jehovah denotes his covenant faithfulness
- The full meaning of the name Jehovah was not revealed until the time of Moses (Exodus 6:3)

- The combination of the two shows God to be both powerful but also personal and immanent
- There is a chiasmic structure in Genesis 2-3

A: The man is placed in the garden of Eden. (2:4-17)  
     B: God commands the man (2:16)  
         C: The creation of woman (2:22)  
             D: The serpent tempts Eve (3:1)  
                 E: The first sin (3:6)  
                     D': The serpent is punished (3:14)  
                         C': The woman is punished (3:16)  
                             B': The man is punished (3:14-21)  
                                 A': The man is driven out (3:22-24)

## I. THE FORMATION OF ADAM (4-7)

### A. The conditions on earth

1. The plants were created in a state of maturity, ready for man and animals to make use of
2. The land was watered by a mist, rather than rain
  - a. The plants were created on day three and at least for the duration of the creation week, this mist sustained them
  - b. Some claim that there was no rain before the flood, but this is not explicitly stated in Scripture
  - c. It may be that after the creation week the normal hydrological cycle produced rain on the earth
3. "There was not a man to till the ground"
  - a. Here we see God's intention for man is to have dominion over the earth and to work within the natural creation
  - b. The words "till" (5) and "dress" (15) are the same word (*abad*) which means to work

### B. God formed man and gave him life

1. The basic chemical elements that are found in the earth comprise the human body

2. The truth that man is dust should have a humbling effect upon us
3. Throughout the Bible, man as dust is used as an emblem:
  - a. The emblem of frailty (Psalm 103:14)
  - b. The emblem of nothingness (Genesis 18:27)
  - c. The emblem of defilement (Isaiah 52:2)
  - d. The emblem of humiliation (Lamentations 3:29; Job 42:6)
  - e. The emblem of mourning (Joshua 7:6)
  - f. The emblem of mortality (Ecclesiastes 3:20; 12:7)  
(Horatius Bonar)
4. After forming man, God imparted life to man
  - a. God is shown to be the author of life – there is no life without God
  - b. No other creature was bestowed this honour of God breathing life directly into him, only the image-bearer of God, showing again the separation between man and other creatures
  - c. The life God breathed into Adam was more than physical, it was spiritual, making him spiritual alive and able to commune with God
  - d. Adam became a living soul, or a living man – the soul being descriptive of the whole man

## **II. THE FELICITY OF EDEN (8-16)**

- A. God planted a garden in Eden
  1. Though God made all plant life on day three, on the sixth day he planted this garden in Eden for man to dwell in
  2. God put man in this garden
- B. The trees of the garden
  1. Of particular importance are the trees of the garden of Eden

2. These trees were “good for food”, they were made for the purpose of sustaining life
3. But they were also “pleasant to the sight”, not only functional but aesthetically pleasing
  - a. God’s works are not only intended to fulfil a purpose, but to display beauty
  - b. “He hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)
  - c. God is beautiful (Psalm 27:4), is the source of all beauty and is to be worshipped “in the beauty of holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalm 29:2; 96:9)
  - d. Rebellious man rejects God and therefore rejects God’s beauty, as is evidenced in man’s pursuit of ugliness in art, music, architecture, etc.
  - e. When Christ came to earth, man said, “there is no beauty that we should desire him”, but to those who believe, he is beautiful
4. The tree of life was placed in the garden for man to eat from
  - a. This particular tree has properties to preserve sustain life, even of fallen man, to enable him to live forever
  - b. The tree is emblematic of man’s creative state, his fallen state and his redeemed state – first in having access to the tree, secondly in being banished from it, and finally in being restored to it in the new earth and new Jerusalem (Revelation 22:2)

#### C. The rivers from Eden

1. Verses 10-14 can be regarded as parenthetical, giving geographical descriptions of the pre-flood world
2. Adam perhaps gave this description for the benefit of his descendants who might have wondered where Eden was located
3. These descriptions of geographical locations, rivers and even minerals and gems found in them, give further confirmation that this account is a literal historical account, not mere poetry or allegory

4. In the original creation, a fountain flowed from Eden which became four rivers
  - a. Pison – increase
  - b. Gihon – bursting forth
  - c. Hiddekel – rapid
  - d. Euphrates – fruitfulness
  
5. Though the names Hiddekel, Euphrates, Havilah, Ethiopia and Assyria occur later in Scripture and in history, the original rivers and locations would have been destroyed in the flood – the latter bore the same names but were in different places

#### D. Adam's role in Eden

1. Adam was given the responsibility to dress and keep the garden
2. Even in paradise, God expected man to occupy himself with productive activity
3. God works, and man is to work – work is a blessed gift from God
4. After the fall, the ground was cursed, and work became toilsome and burdensome, yet still retained its blessings and rewards (3:17-19)
5. God's people especially should be diligent in their work (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

### III. THE FORBIDDEN TREE (16-17)

#### A. This is a command from God

1. Previously God has blessed man and given mandates for man (1:28-30)
2. Here God gives clear and strict commandment

#### B. The freedom to eat of the trees

1. Adam was permitted to eat freely of the abundance of the trees in the garden of Eden
2. God is a bountiful God who intends for man to be blessed and to enjoy the bounties of his creation within the boundaries he has set

3. Too often man is blind to God's kind provision for us and only sees what God forbids

C. The prohibition to eat from one tree

1. God gave only one simple prohibitive command – “thou shalt not eat of it”
2. The tree itself was not intrinsically evil – the fruit was not poisonous – everything was “very good” (1:31)
3. The tree was chosen by God to perform the role of a test for man – will he choose God and life, or will he choose sin and death?
4. It is called the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” because through this tree man would know good and evil
  - a. By obedience, know good and evil as victors over temptation
  - b. By disobedience, know good and evil as slaves to sin
5. God intended that through this tree humans would come to know good and evil: either from above, as masters of temptation, or from below, as slaves to sin.
6. *“The tree of knowledge was to lead man to the knowledge of good and evil; and, according to the divine intention, this was to be attained through his not eating of its fruit. This end was to be accomplished, not only by his discerning in the limit imposed by the prohibition the difference between that which accorded with the will of God and that which opposed it, but also by his coming eventually, through obedience to the prohibition, to recognize the fact that all that is opposed to the will of God is an evil to be avoided, and through voluntary resistance to such evil, to the full development of the freedom of choice originally imparted to him into the actual freedom of a deliberate and self-conscious choice of good. By obedience to the divine will he would have attained to a godlike knowledge of good and evil, i.e. to one in accordance with his own likeness to God. He would have detected the evil in the approaching tempter; but instead of yielding to it, he would have resisted it, and thus have made good his own property acquired with consciousness and of his won free-will, and in this way by proper self-determination would gradually have advanced to the possession of the truest liberty. But as he failed to keep this divine appointed way, and ate the forbidden fruit in opposition to the command of God, the power*

*imparted by God to the fruit was manifested in a different way. He learned the difference between good and evil from his own guilty experience, and by receiving the evil into his own soul, fell a victim to the threatened death.*

*Thus through his own fault the tree, which should have helped him to attain true freedom, brought nothing but a sham liberty of sin, and with it death, and that without any demoniacal power of destruction being conjured into the tree itself, or any fatal poison being hidden in its fruit.”*

(Franz Delitzch)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. If we trace our ancestry back to the beginning we find that we all come from one source – the dust of the ground
2. Is this how you view yourself – as nothing but mere filthy dirt, who will one day return to dust?
3. This is the humble attitude by which we must approach our God, like Abraham – “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27)
4. God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and to us also as his creatures, he has breathed physical life into each one of us
5. But there is another breath of life we need God to breathe into us – a *spiritual* life
6. In John 20:22, the Lord Jesus, echoing the creation of Adam, breathed on the disciples that they would receive the Holy Ghost (John 20:22)
7. Have you come to Jesus Christ for the everlasting life that is found only in him?