

# The Early Chapters of Genesis - Introduction

## PART 1 - God's Active Involvement in History: A Guarantee of His Future Involvement

2 Peter 3:3-7

<sup>3</sup> First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup> But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup> By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. <sup>7</sup> By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

### *What Does the Scripture Say?*

What will happen in the "last days" (v.3)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

These people are characterized by two things:

- They will mock and scoff. (We will learn more about this in v. 4.)
- They will do as they please.

The word "evil" was added by the translators, as being implied. *Any* desire that is put ahead of "love for God and neighbor" - Matthew 22:37-40 - is evil. (Also: Some translations use the word "lust," but in the N.T. Greek, "lust" and "desire" are the *same* word. The context shows us whether the desire is good or evil.)

They do not want their conduct to be restrained by God's moral laws. They reject (and mock) God's revelation of truth (his Word), and set up their own "guidelines" for life.

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;  
but blessed is he who keeps the law. (Proverbs 29:18)

- For a further description of what these people do, see Jude 1:18 (and the context, v. 14-19).
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5 describes what people will be like during the "last days." (Read it. Does it sound anything like today?)

### *Their Mockery of What God Says*

What is one of the things they will mock (v. 4a)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What will they claim is the basis for their mocking (v. 4b)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**"Things go on as they always have."**

This is their "foundational principle." It is a denial that God has an *active* role in the history of the world. *They deliberately ignore the FACT that what they are saying is not true!*

Two specific facts that they *deliberately* ignore (v. 5-6):

- Verse 5 (a reference to the things mentioned in Genesis 1): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Verse 6 (a reference to the things mentioned in Genesis 6-8): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Both of these *facts* testify to the fact that God has the power to keep his promise regarding his future coming. If God could *create* the world by simply uttering a *word* (v. 5), and if he could *destroy* the world by sending a global flood, then nothing can stop him from coming back again, when he is ready to do so (v. 7)!

**More about his future coming:**

- Why hasn't he come back yet (v. 8-9)?  
Time is not an issue. Also, he's giving more people an opportunity to be saved.
- What will happen when he does come (v. 10, 12b-13)?  
A judgment of fire will occur; a new heaven and earth will be formed. (Other Scripture passages tell us about other events that will also occur at this time.)
- How should we respond to this fact (v. 11-12a, 14+)?  
Live in a way that is holy, godly and blameless; waiting with anticipation (for his return); etc. We must certainly *not* live the unrestrained way these mockers are living! (Read chapter 2 for a further description of them.)

***How Do They Explain-Away What God Did in the Past?***

If they're going to *deliberately* ignore these two facts (the creation and the global flood), how are they going to explain them away?

In the past, most people (even *non*-Christians) accepted the fact of creation. They might not have always gotten all the details correct, but they couldn't get around the fact that it must have happened. However, most realized that the *fact* of creation implied that we have a moral accountability to the one who created us. This implied a future judgment - and people who wanted to do as they please didn't like this idea.

One way to get around this (quite popular at times in the past) was to admit that God created the world, but then claim that he later chose to leave creation alone, to take care of itself. (They still denied a future accountability.)

A more recent way to try to get around this future judgment is to simply deny what God has done in the past. In recent centuries, one of the popular methods has been to claim that there never was a creation or flood, but that things have always gone on as they do now. Instead of God's instant act of creation (caused by the mere utterance of his word - v. 5), they claim that nature "created" itself, through imperceptibly slow changes, over millions and billions of years! They simply deny God's active involvement in history (at numerous times in the past, not just at creation), and invent myths and stories as a substitute for the truth.

One of the ways they bolster support for their invented stories is to claim that their views are "scientific." Actually, the issue is not that *science* supports their views; rather, their *philosophical speculations* about the past are used to *redefine* the facts which can be observed at the present. (What they can't redefine, they ignore.) It's not an issue of "facts," but of assumptions and speculations that are used to *change* the significance of the facts. More than that, since it supposedly took millions of years for these things to occur, they would claim that you *can't* observe them happening. You simply have to accept *by faith* that it happened!

Remember this: The people who invent these stories (see 2 Peter 2:3) may act as though they are "seekers of truth," but they are *not* neutral and unbiased. They have an agenda to remove God from the story. They want to "do as they please" (v. 4), without any accountability to God. Many people will be deceived by their myths - people who will blindly follow, and then zealously promote the stories they have been told to believe. What they say will sound very attractive to those who reject the Word of God (compare to 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Their talk will also appeal to those who delight in the thought of unrestrained living - which they may even redefine as "freedom" (compare to 2 Peter 2:18-19). *However, none of this can do away with the FACTS they deliberately ignore.*

## ***Is There Any "Middle Ground"?***

There have been many attempts to find a "middle ground" between what Genesis says and what these false teachers say. These false teachers are often quite vocal about their views, and use "scientific-sounding" words that make them sound authoritative. Many people blindly swallow what these false teachers dish-out, because they don't know how to examine the evidence for themselves. Some, attempting to "rescue" the Genesis account, try to merge the two viewpoints together into one.

God claims to have created everything in six days. This has always been the normal way to accept the description found in Genesis 1, when the text was allowed to "speak for itself." Prior to the invention of these modern "stories," people didn't see anything in the text of Scripture to indicate anything else. This is because there *isn't* anything else there!

However, when people *wanted* to see something else there (such as millions of years), they began to *read into* the text things that aren't there. This is how they came up with "compromise views" between truth and error.

Here are some of the views that have been invented over the past two centuries:

- One view claims that a "gap" occurs between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. People who hold to this view claim that "evolution" occurred between these two verses, and that the events described in the rest of Genesis 1 occurred after that. One variation of this view claims that everything "evolved," that it was destroyed (perhaps by a catastrophe), and that God then "re-created" things, in the way described in Genesis 1.
- Another view claims that each "day" in Genesis 1 represents millions of years. In some ways, this view is almost like an act of desperation, because the descriptions of the seven days simply *don't* correlate with the "theories" that the mockers invented.
- Of course, there will be others who claim that the entire creation account is a "myth" and that it wasn't intended to be taken seriously - even though nothing in Scripture would suggest that!

## ***The Present-Day Conflict between Facts and Mockery***

Today, as always in the past, there are many scientists who accept the Bible's account of creation. Even many *non-Christian* scientists are convinced that the universe is so complex, that "something" had to bring it into existence. (Many people who hold to the "intelligent design" theory fall into this category.)

However, the myth that nature "created itself" over billions of years has become the predominant view. Its proponents are the most vocal - *and the most vicious in attempting to suppress* (and distort the public perception of) *the views of others*. Because their view is so compatible with the spirit of the "last days," it may remain the predominant force, *the facts notwithstanding*. Perhaps this mockery is one of the things that must first happen, before God returns (contrary to their mockery) and brings the "last days" to a close!

## PART 2 - About the Differences between Genesis 1 and 2

The book of Genesis is a compilation of eleven different eyewitness accounts of various events that happened in history, all combined into one book (actually, a "scroll"), by Moses. Because chapters 1 and 2 (beginning with verse 4) are different accounts, we can *expect* differences in what they say and how they say it. The one difference we will *not* see is a difference caused by *contradictions*.

- Note that chapter and verse divisions are *not* inspired. People added them thousands of years later, in an attempt to make it easier to locate specific passages. Sometimes they did a poor job at choosing where to put the divisions. This is why the first account ends at 2:3, rather than at the end of chapter 1.

Below are two significant differences between Genesis 1 and 2:

### *The Difference of Who the Eyewitness Was*

**Genesis 1** (and the first 3 verses of chapter 2) is an eyewitness account given by *God*, not by people. Humans weren't present to witness it (except for a few hours on Day 6 and all of Day 7)! God was the only one mentioned in the account, who could know what he did!

- Plants and animals couldn't tell us. They lack the ability for conscious reflection, since they don't bear the image of God.
- There is no record of when heavenly creatures were created. They are not mentioned here, and there is no evidence that they had anything to do with what occurred in this chapter.

**Genesis 2** (starting with verse 4) is the first part of ten historical accounts that were witnessed by *humans*.

These accounts were first transmitted verbally, and then (after writing was developed) written down.

- In the early centuries of human existence, there was a large overlap between generations (due to the great longevity of humans at that time - see Genesis 5). This would have guaranteed the accuracy of verbally-transmitted historical records. Unlike today, there would never be an instance in which the wealth of past information would be at the mercy of one or two people who were becoming forgetful in their old age.
- Most of Genesis 2 would have been personally witnessed by Adam, and he could have communicated it to his offspring. The account focuses mostly on where Adam lived, what he was supposed to do, and how his wife came into existence. It doesn't really say much about what happened on the first 5½ days of the earth's existence, because Adam wasn't there to see it! (There is just a short summary statement that certain things *didn't* exist, until God made them. Either Adam or Moses could have added these initial comments to the account, based on information God had given about the event.)
- This specific account continues to the end of chapter 4. The other nine accounts are about: Adam's line (5:1-6:8); Noah (6:9-9:29); Shem, Ham and Japheth (10:1-11:9); Shem (11:10-26); Terah (11:27-25:11); Abraham's son Ishmael (25:12-18); Abraham's son Isaac (25:19-35:29); Esau (36:1-37:1); and Jacob (37:2-50:26).
- The final wording of these accounts, as we have them today, would have been determined by Moses (guided by God), as he wrote down the five books of the Law (Genesis through most of Deuteronomy). Also, he did not necessarily have to include *everything* mentioned in the original accounts - only what was needed.

### *The Difference of How the word "Day" Is Used*

**Genesis 1** uses the word "day" in a distinctly *literal, chronological* manner. God *defines* the word in terms of events that occur every 24 hours: evening and morning.

- There is absolutely nothing in the context (or in any other Scripture passage that directly refers to this chapter) to suggest that the word is merely symbolic. (That idea was invented later, after people had *already* chosen to *not* accept what was written *the way it was written*.)

**Genesis 2** (beginning with v. 4) uses the word "day" in a distinctly *symbolical* manner.

- There is nothing in the context to suggest that the word is being used in reference to a 24-hour time period. Rather, it is used in the sense of "when." The phrase, "*in the day that God created...*" means about the same as, "*when God created.*"

# The Beginning

## Genesis 1:1-3a

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said ...

### God Created - the Basic Facts

Who created (v. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_

What did he create (v.1)? \_\_\_\_\_

When did he create (v. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did he create? [Technically, there was no "where" until he created it!]

Why did he create? [This question is answered in other Scripture passages. (See below.)]

How did he create (v. 3a)? \_\_\_\_\_

### God Created - More Details

*Summarize what the following Scripture passages teach us.*

#### Who was involved in creating?

- The Father - 1 Corinthians 8:6 \_\_\_\_\_
- The Son - Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_
- The Holy Spirit - Genesis 1:2 \_\_\_\_\_

#### What did God create?

- Nehemiah 9:6; Acts 14:15; John 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_

## Why did God create?

*Because he wanted to.*

- Revelation 4:11 (especially the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the verse) \_\_\_\_\_

*Not because he needed anything.*

- Acts 17:25 \_\_\_\_\_

*For a purpose: Creation was made to reflect the nature of its creator.*

- Romans 1:20 \_\_\_\_\_

- Psalm 19:1 \_\_\_\_\_

*Through creation, we also learn about God's greatness (and our "smallness").*

- Isaiah 40:21-26 \_\_\_\_\_

- Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

- Psalm 8:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

## How did he create?

*By simply uttering the word (or command).*

- Hebrews 11:3 \_\_\_\_\_

- Psalm 33:9 \_\_\_\_\_

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>"God spoke and it was"</b> God took <i>nothing</i> and, by uttering a command, created <i>something</i> out of it!</p>
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*In a manner that demonstrated wisdom.*

- Jeremiah 10:12 \_\_\_\_\_

- Psalm 104:24 \_\_\_\_\_

## More about the "reflection of God" in creation:

As mentioned above, creation was created in a way that would reflect the nature of its creator.

Because of the effects of sin (and the resulting "curse" in Genesis 3), creation is presently in a marred

condition. It still reflects God's nature, but not as well as it used to. Also, it is wearing out - again due to the consequences of sin. However, God has promised that he will one day restore all things. The earth will be purified by fire and it will become like a *new* earth. (The heavens will also be made new.)

- Consider what these verses say: Romans 8:22; Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:10-11, 13; Revelation 21:1

One aspect of this "new creation" has already begun... in God's people.

- What do these verses say? 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24
- Interestingly, we also are purified by the "fire" of trials - 1 Peter 1:6-7.

## The "Time Span" of Creation

### How long did it take?

Genesis 1:31-2:1; Exodus 20:11; 31:17 (see also v. 18) \_\_\_\_\_

- In the Exodus passages, who is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there anything in these passages to suggest that he *didn't* mean a normal "day"? \_\_\_\_\_
- If people disagree with what these verses say, who is in error? People or God? \_\_\_\_\_

Some people claim that the word "day" is merely symbolic of millions or billions of years. Nothing in the Genesis 1 passage suggests such a view! Such an "interpretation" (*mis*-interpretation) didn't really exist until *after* people began to deny the accuracy of the Scriptures, and wanted to modify the Genesis account so it would "fit" the opinions of people who opposed it.

### Is the work of creation still going on?

- Genesis 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_

### What is God/Jesus doing today, as far as creation is concerned?

- Colossians 1:17b; Hebrews 1:3 (middle of the verse) \_\_\_\_\_

## The "Starting Point" of Creation (v. 2)

*What was creation like, when it was initially created?*

**Formless** - no distinct shape or boundary. Things that would occur, to give creation *form*:

- Day 1 (Genesis 1:3) - light and darkness
- Day 2 (Genesis 1:6-7) - a sky that separated the waters above it and the waters below it
- Day 3 (Genesis 1:9-10) - dry land

**Empty** - no inhabitants. Things that would occur, to give creation *inhabitants*:

- Day 3 (Genesis 1:11-12) - vegetation
- Day 4 (Genesis 1:14-18) - sun, moon, stars
- Day 5 (Genesis 1:20-21) - sea creatures, flying creatures
- Day 6 (Genesis 1:24-27) - land creatures, humans

Here, these two words (formless and empty) indicate a readiness for *construction* - the development of shapes (or boundaries) and the filling of creation with inhabitants. Later, the prophets will use these same two words to indicate the consequences of *destruction* - a judgment against certain nations (Isaiah 34:11; Jeremiah 4:23). Judgment would be so severe, that it would be as though the *constructive* work of creation was *reversed*!

There were three things present at the "beginning" of creation:

- **Darkness** - the *absence* of light; "nothingness"
- **Watery depths** - ocean-like depths of water
- **The Spirit of God** - hovering (or moving) over the waters, poised ready for action

At this point, creation could be described as  
a dark, empty, wet "blob" surrounded by "nothingness."  
It was the starting point for something grand to happen  
... and that was why the Spirit of God was there.

## The "Creator - Creature" Distinction

At the end of verse 2, there is only *one* significant "distinction": the distinction between God and everything that is "not God" (all of creation). However, this is the most significant distinction in all the Bible, for it *defines* the relationship between creation and God.

What is the significance of this? Here are just a few things:

- God is *not* a "super creature," like other creatures, except more powerful. On the other hand, the devil is *not* an eternally existing "competitor" to God, but is a created being (initially good, according to Genesis 1:31).
- God is not like us. We don't make (or define) him based on *our* "image" (what *we* are). Rather, we were made in *his* "image" (a reflection of what *he* is - Genesis 1:27).
- The contrast between God and creation is so great, that we can comprehend God *only to the extent that he reveals himself in terms we can understand*. This is possible only because God *designed* creation to reflect his character. Even then, our understanding is limited, because *finite* creation can never fully reflect the character of the *infinite* God.
- The difference between the Creator and creation is so great, that there are ways God will interact with creation that we cannot fully understand or respond to. (To help us comprehend this difference, God has compared it to a human interacting with an inanimate piece of clay - Jeremiah 18:3-6; Romans 9:21.) On the other hand, he has also chosen to interact with us on *our* level - and on *this* level, we are accountable for the way we respond.

# Giving Form to Creation

## Genesis 1:2-10

<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

## Some Introductory Comments

### Common Themes Each Day

1. God simply speaks and what he commands occurs.
2. God defines the significance of things by giving them names. Adam will also do this (Genesis 2:19-20). [Names were not randomly given, but were appropriately chosen (or created) so as to communicate something about the object being named.]
3. When something new is made, the day's work is not complete until it can be evaluated and called "good." There is *nothing* that isn't "good."
4. "Day" is defined as being comprised of an evening and a morning.
  - Nothing occurs in the context that would suggest that the word is being used in a merely symbolic way.
  - The Old Testament Hebrew concept of "day" follows this pattern, starting in the evening, rather than at midnight (the time we start *our* "day").

## What happened in heaven, the place where the angels live?

We are not given *any* information about the creation of "form" in heaven. We are told a few things about its inhabitants (in other Scripture passages), but no details about their creation. This is because God tells us what we need to know for *our* life and existence... and details about the creation of heavenly beings don't fall into this category. They could have been created on Day 1 (when the "heavens" were created), on Day 4 (when other heavenly objects - sun/moon/stars - were created), or at various times during the "creation week" (when corresponding entities were created on earth - "form" on the first three days and inhabitants after that).

One thing we *do* know is this: The Devil and all his followers were *not* created evil; for at the end of the creation week, *everything* was very good (1:31).

## Day 1 - Separation of Light from Dark

**Remember the starting point:** A dark, empty, wet "blob" surrounded by "nothingness" (v. 2).

On Day 1, what did God make, once the earth itself had been created? (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did he make it (v.3a)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was God's evaluation of what he had just done (v. 4a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Initially, there was no distinction between light and dark areas on the earth. Perhaps there was a diffuse grayness everywhere, with light waves (or photons) moving in random directions. (This would include the entire "electromagnetic spectrum," of which visible light is just a part.) But this would quickly change:

What type of "distinction" or "separation" did God make (4b)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did God define the two parts of this "distinction"; what did he call them (v. 5a)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- This light was "concentrated" into a general location on one side of the earth (which, at this point, was still just a watery "blob"). This meant that half the earth was illuminated by light, while the other half was in darkness - just like today. But unlike today, the light source had not been localized to a specific object, such as the sun, because no objects had yet been created in space. (That occurred on Day 4, and from then on, the photons which give us daylight come from the sun.)
  - Even today, scientists can detect a small amount of "background noise" in space - photons or electromagnetic waves (which includes light waves), which are not necessarily associated with any specific heavenly object.
  - Note also that the sun will not be *needed* for light, in the future "New Jerusalem," for the source of light will be God himself. (See Revelation 21:23; 22:5. It won't be *needed*, but these verses don't say specifically that the sun will or won't *exist*. Perhaps it will exist for other areas of the earth that are a long distance from the New Jerusalem.)

How did God define the word "day" (v. 5b, 8b, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

- In the Old Testament, the Jewish day began at sunset. This follows the pattern seen here, in which the day began with darkness and ended with light.

### **Symbolism in the Bible - Light and Darkness as an Example**

God created the physical world in a way that would enable it to teach us truths about God, and about various non-physical concepts. Because of this, some of the things mentioned in the creation account, such as light and darkness, took on a symbolic significance.

God made the nature of light and darkness in such a way that they would be able to teach us spiritual realities about good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, etc. Having been "separated" by God (v. 4), the two are mutually incompatible. There is even significance in the fact that darkness is the *absence* of light. (See John 1:4-5.) Note, however, that this does not mean the *original created entities* had that significance. As part of creation, even the darkness was "good" in God's sight.

Even before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve would have been able to learn something about the non-physical concepts that were illustrated by light and darkness. They would have had at least some idea of the incompatibility of good and evil. They did not have to *experience* the evil, in order to know that it was incompatible with good. Had they chosen to *not* sin (Genesis 3), they would have still known the difference.

## **Day 2 - Separation of Water from Water**

What was separated or divided (v. 6-7)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Day 2 begins with a watery "blob" that now has light and dark areas (on opposite sides). On this day, the water is divided into two locations, separated by an "expanse" (called "firmament," in some translations).

What does God call (or name) this "expanse"? \_\_\_\_\_

- This "expanse" is defined (or named), but it isn't really anything *new*, which needed evaluated (and called "good"). It was more an issue of separating something that was already there. The "expanse" (sky or heaven) was more an *absence* of something (water), than its *presence* - just like darkness is the *absence* of light.

### **More about the "expanse" and "heaven"**

The "expanse" is *between* the earth and the "waters in the sky," as well as *above* those waters. It would include all that we call "sky" and "space." This is why, on Day 4, we read that the sun, moon and stars are also in the "expanse" of the sky.

When this account was written, the "expanse" was basically "the area up there" and was essentially inaccessible to humans. The specific distances to the water layer or to the sun/moon/stars was not an issue. They were all simply "up there"! Birds (Day 5) would also inhabit the lower parts of this "expanse."

The word "heaven" is also used to refer to many things - the sky (where the birds and clouds are), the universe (where the sun, moon and stars are), the place where God resides, etc. The context helps us understand what is meant.

### What are the "waters above the earth"?

Most people interpret this as referring to the clouds - and it probably does. But some have interpreted this passage as suggesting something different, perhaps a "canopy" of water vapor, surrounding the earth, *higher than* the clouds. Such a layer, they argue, would have been invisible, allowing the sun to pass through it; but it would have acted similar to a greenhouse, providing a uniform, warm climate worldwide, and protecting the earth from the dangerous rays of the sun. (This idea of a uniform climate agrees with fossil evidence, which shows that there were at one time tropical plants and animals at the North and South Poles. It also agrees with the Genesis 5 record, which shows us that the early earth's inhabitants had significantly longer life spans than people do today.) Those holding this view would say that this layer was destroyed when the waters in the sky came down during the global Flood in Noah's day.

More recently, computer models designed to test this theory have suggested that such a "greenhouse layer," if it existed, would have been *too hot*! So unless further evidence shows differently, there is no reason to change our view that this passage is a reference to the clouds and water vapor we normally observe in the atmosphere.

There is an important thing to remember, when considering theories such as this is: Man-made theories come and go. Some may prove reasonably accurate; some may be disproved. Whatever the case, *the Bible remains accurate in what it says*, whether or not our attempts to explain it are correct! We should always be willing to modify our views, if doing so will make them closer to what Scripture says!

## Day 3 (Part 1) - Separation of Land and Water

Which water layer is the focus of this day (v. 9a)? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened to this water layer, and what appeared, as a result of it happening (v. 9)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did God define these two entities? What did he call them (v. 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was God's evaluation of these accomplishments (v. 10b)? \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional comments about the sea and the land:

- At the global flood, the seas again covered the earth (Genesis 7-8), but they will never do so again (Psalm 104:9).
- Revelation. 21:1 tells us specifically that there will be no sea on the new earth.

## A Job Well Done.

At this point, all the "forms" or "separations" have been made... and none have been made since then. Today, we have light and darkness, water, earth and sky (including the "space" of the universe).

# Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 1

## Genesis 1:11-19

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day.

## Introductory Comments

On each day, certain things are described as being created or made. These are representative of entire *categories* of created beings (or objects), including those which might not be specifically mentioned. For instance, when vegetation is created on the third day, two classes of vegetation are mentioned. Those which are *not* mentioned (such as *water* plants) would still have been included.

## Day 3b - Vegetation

One major function of vegetation is to provide for the animals - food (energy source), oxygen, shelter, etc. These things will need to be present before the animals can be created. (Plants have other important functions, as well, such as providing beauty, variation in the scenery, etc.)

What did God create? (What did he cause the land to produce?) Two categories are mentioned (v. 11-12).

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

How did they reproduce? \_\_\_\_\_

- The creative act on this day focuses on vegetation. The two specific plant groups which are mentioned focus on *land* plants. Other types of vegetation (such as water plants, one-celled plants, and anything else that doesn't fit into the "animal" category) were probably created at the same time.
- Some plants don't reproduce by way of *seeds*. If they were created that way, then they are among the plants that are not specifically mentioned in the text. However, they may have degenerated and lost their seed-bearing capability, due to the effects of the Fall (Genesis 3), or the ecological changes that occurred after the Flood (Genesis 6-8). Either way, they still reproduce after their "kind."
- What we see today is only a small representative of the many kinds of plants that were originally created. The fossil record indicates that an enormous variety of plants (as well as animals) have become extinct. Most of this probably occurred when creatures had difficulty adjusting to the radically changed environmental conditions after the Flood.

What was God's conclusion at the end of the day (v. 12b)? \_\_\_\_\_

### What is meant by the word "KIND"?

Today, scientists use concepts, such as *family*, *genus* and *species*, to describe plants and animals. The Old Testament word "kind" (specifically, the Hebrew word "*min*") is found Genesis, the book of Leviticus, and a few other places. When we compare the modern and the Old Testament terms, we discover that a "kind" generally represents something above the level of *species* - often between the modern concepts of *family* and *genus*. Sometimes it may even have a broader meaning.

This is important to understand for several reasons. First, since God created plants and animals to reproduce offspring "according to their kinds," this *limits* the extent of variability among creatures. This means that one "kind" of creature *cannot* change into another "kind." Fish *cannot* become amphibians or reptiles; reptiles *cannot* become birds or mammals; primates *cannot* become humans. It is impossible - an imaginary concept at best.

On the other hand, there can be lots of variation *within* a "kind." The original "dog kind" would include not only modern-day dogs of many shapes and sizes (ranging from Chihuahuas to Great Danes), but foxes, wolves, coyotes, jackals, and several other related species. There can be a *great* variety, but they will *always* be part of the "dog kind," and will *never* change into another type of "kind."

This agrees fully with all known scientific evidence. There often *is* a wide variety within a specific "kind" of plant or animal. However, there is *no* evidence - either in present observations, or in the past fossil record, that shows a transition from one "kind" to another.

Knowing this information is also valuable when one attempts to calculate the amount of room that may have been needed on Noah's ark. Instead of *two each* of dogs, foxes, wolves, coyotes, jackals, and all the other related species, Noah would have needed only a male and a female of the "dog kind." This greatly reduces the number of animals that would have needed to be on the ark. When looked at this way, there would have been *plenty* of room for *all* known "kinds" of animals (even those now extinct) that would have needed to be on the ark.

## Day 4 - The "Inhabitants" of the Sky

What are three of the things God created in the sky (v. 16)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The Hebrew word for "lights," in this passage, is *not* the same as the word "light" in verse 3. In verse 3, the word refers to "illumination" (the light itself); here it refers to "a luminous body" (an object that gives off light).

- The word "star" is probably representative of *all* the objects that would have been created in the "sky" (universe), other than the sun and moon. This would include planets, meteors, asteroids, comets, and the rest. This is because our *modern* definition of "star" has been around for only a few centuries. Today, we think of the *composition* of the object - such as huge ball of gaseous plasma (= a star), or a clump of frozen ice and debris (= a comet), etc. But before recent centuries, a "star" was defined by what was visible with the naked eye - a distant point of light in the sky. Planets would be points of light that moved about the sky - "wandering stars." Meteorites would have been called "falling stars," etc. Though this may seem strange to us, with our "modern" definitions of the words, this was all perfectly legitimate, when based on *their* definition of the word "star."

## There were four reasons for these lights:

Reason #1 (v. 14a and 18b) - \_\_\_\_\_

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- Remember that there was *already* light separating night from day (v. 3). Now, however, that light would be "centralized" into one location.

Reason #2 (v. 14b) - \_\_\_\_\_

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- A "sign" is an *indicator*, a *reminder*, or a *warning* about something. Scripture mentions many instances in which something is used as a "sign" of something else. Some signs were miraculous; others weren't. Scriptures which give examples of signs include: Genesis 4:15 (apparently some type of mark on Cain); 9:12-17 (a rainbow); 17:11 (circumcision); numerous passages in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (various things God did, when Israel was in Egypt and in the desert); Joshua 4:6 (a mound of stones in, or next to, the Jordan River); 1 Samuel 2:34 (the death of Hophni and Phinehas); 14:10 (enemy soldiers saying, "Come up to us."); 2 Kings 20:8-11 (the sun's shadow moving backwards); Isaiah 7:14 (the virgin being with child); etc.
- The word "sign" does *not* refer to occult practices, such as astrology. We don't worship the stars or look to them for guidance. Rather, we acknowledge that they *reflect* the glory of God - Psalm 19:1. We worship the God who created the stars, and look to him for guidance.
- Many believe that the phrase "seasons and days and years" explains what these "signs" are. (Some, but not all, translations reflect this view.) However there are some instances in Scripture, in which God *did* use activities that occurred in the sky, as either a "sign" of his judgment on wicked people, or as an indicator of some extraordinary event (such as the birth of Jesus). For some examples, see: Joel 2:30; Jeremiah 10:2; Matthew 2:2; 24:29; and Luke 21:25.
- The sun, moon and stars are indicators of the time of day, and of the different times and seasons of the year. They have been used to determine when various social, ceremonial and religious activities and events were to occur. Knowledge of their positions can also be used in determining one's location on the earth (longitude and latitude).

Reason #3 (v. 16a and 18a) - \_\_\_\_\_

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- This refers specifically to functions of the sun and the moon. The word *govern* (or *rule*) does not mean that they exert any "magical influence" over the earth. (This is a view that developed when people rejected the *Creator* and began to worship *created things*, instead.)

- In what sense do the sun and moon govern? During the day (when the sun *rules*), "daylight activities" tend to occur; and during the night (when the moon *rules*), "night time activities" tend to occur. Their presence influences just about everything we do! This is illustrated in Psalm 104:19-23.

Reason #4 (v. 15 and 17) - \_\_\_\_\_

- How is this different from Reason #1? The first reason focused on the distinction between day and night - a distinction that had already existed, but which was originally accomplished in a different way.

The emphasis in this fourth reason is specifically on the fact that the light would hit the earth. Probably implied are the *consequences* of that light hitting the earth - ranging from the ability for animals (and humans) to see things, to the warmth that the sun provides, to the energy that the plants absorb (thus converting the light energy into an energy form that the animals can use - food).

What was God's conclusion at the end of the day (v. 18c)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which came first? The sun and stars, or the earth? \_\_\_\_\_

- We live in a day, in which many false teachers (*liars*, from God's perspective) claim that the sun and stars came into existence *prior to* the earth. They *deliberately* ignore the *facts* about the creation of the heavens and the earth. (See 2 Peter 3:3-7.)

### Comments about the length of months and years.

There is an interesting difference between the "prophetic" month and year, and our "calendar" month and year. In prophecy, Scripture often defines a "month" as being 30 days, and a year as being 360 days. For instance, Revelation 11:2-3; 11:11; 12:6, 14; and 13:5 all seem to refer to the same length of time: 1260 days = 42 months (of 30 days each) = "a time, times and half a time" = 3½ years (of 360 days each).

Perhaps more interesting is this: In the *historical* account of the Great Flood (Genesis 6-8), a careful analysis of the dates and times mentioned also reveals a year of 360 days.

Is all this merely for convenience? Some people might think so. But there is a distinct possibility that something happened at the time of the flood, to cause the number of days in a year to change. The events of the Flood were totally catastrophic and destructive. It not only included massive amounts of water falling from the sky, but also massive earthquake (and probably volcanic) activity. (Remember that the "springs of the deep" - underground aquifers of water - *burst forth* - Genesis 7:11.) What could have caused such a sudden catastrophe? It has been suggested that the earth may have been hit by a huge meteor or asteroid... and if this were the case, it could have even affected the earth's orbit around the sun. (It could have also caused the 23½ degree tilt that the earth has on its axis.)

The idea of meteors (or something similar) hitting the earth is not at all far-fetched. Scientific evidence shows that it *has* happened in the past, and Scripture suggests that it may happen again.

- There is strong evidence that meteors have hit the earth. Scientists have discovered huge craters at numerous locations around the earth. Some of them are over 100 miles (160 km) in diameter!
- The book of Revelation suggests that it is going to happen again. Revelation 8:10-11 mentions a "star" (using the definition of the word that was common at that time) that will someday hit the earth and destroy a significant portion of it. Its description resembles a comet or meteor.

# Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 2

## Genesis 1:20-26a, 30b - 2:3

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness ..." / <sup>30</sup> ... And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

<sup>2:1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

<sup>2:2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>2:3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

*[We will examine the creation of man (v. 26-30) in greater detail, at a later time.]*

## Day 5 - Inhabitants for the Water and the Air

What did God create to inhabit the sea (v. 20a)? \_\_\_\_\_

There are two categories mentioned, apparently focusing on size. What are they (v. 21a)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Note that the "great" sea creatures would include a number of huge animals that are now extinct, and today are observable only in fossils.

What did God create to inhabit the sky (v. 20b)? \_\_\_\_\_

What characteristic would this category of creature have, according to v. 21b? \_\_\_\_\_

- This passages focuses on *flying* birds. Non-flying birds would have also been created, though not mentioned.
- As defined here, this category of "flying creatures" does not quite match our modern category of "birds." The only requirement was its *wings* (with the necessary bone structure, muscles, etc.). It would include bats, because bats have wings (Leviticus 11:19) - even though our modern categories would place bats under the classification of "mammals" (because of similarities to mammals in other respects).
- Insects are probably among the "creeping things" that were created on Day 6. Their wings are actually a flexible part of their exoskeleton, and are often present for only part of their lifespan.

How were these sea and air creatures made (v. 21)? "According to... \_\_\_\_\_."

- See the previous part of this study, "Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 1," for a look at the meaning of the word "kind."

What was God's evaluation of what he had created (v. 21c)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was God's command to these creatures (v. 22)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This ability to reproduce came into existence as the response to a *command* by God. It is no different than any of the other "creative commands" that God spoke.
- This was a *blessing* (v. 22a) for the animals. The plants would reproduce (form seeds, etc.) with no control or conscious awareness of what was happening. The animals would *choose* to reproduce, and they would obey this command instinctively. Humans, because they bear the "image of God," would fulfill this command *morally* and with conscious reflection on what sexuality represented (such as, the concept of oneness - Genesis 2:23-24). [Unfortunately, sin has greatly distorted the human response to this blessing.]

## Day 6 - Inhabitants for the Land

Though there are some physical *similarities* between animals and humans, the non-physical *differences* form a huge gap that cannot be crossed. Because of this, animals and humans are created as two separate events on Day 6.

During the first part of Day 6, what did God create (the general category - v. 24a)? \_\_\_\_\_

What three sub-categories of these creatures are mentioned in this passage (v. 24-25)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This was a simple, basic classification of land animals: domestic animals, wild animals, and the small creatures that move close to the ground - which would probably include reptiles, amphibians, insects, etc.

What phrase, repeated several times in this passage, indicates *how* they were made? \_\_\_\_\_

- We live in a day in which many people constantly deny this. They want to blur the distinctions between the "kinds," and claim that different "kinds" slowly changed into other "kinds." God is very emphatic that this was *not so*.

What was God's evaluation of this first part of Day 6 (v. 25c)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was created during the second part of Day 6 (v. 26)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the unique characteristic of this created being, something that is *not* said in reference to any other aspect of creation (v. 26a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- "In the image of God" means that humans were created in such a manner that they would be as much like God as a *created* being could be. They were created to *reflect* God's character and moral nature. In other words, humans are not merely "advanced" animals; rather, they possess something that is unique. (Physical similarities or differences are not the issue. You would expect some physical similarities to other creatures, simply because they were all made by the same Creator!)
- The creation of the man and the woman will be examined further, in a later study.

What was God's evaluation, after *all* had been made (v. 31)? \_\_\_\_\_

At this point, was there anything left to be made (2:1-2a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Many people have invented false teachings and myths about how things came into existence. Some claim that "creation" is an ongoing activity (over countless millions of years), and they often deny that God has anything to do with it. Others have claimed that creation contained imperfection or evil, or that Adam *had* to sin (because of the way God made him), etc. But Scripture affirms that the entire creation act was completed in six days... and that it was *very* good. (Anything in creation that is less than "very good" occurred at a later date.)

## Day 7 - Rest

On the seventh day, what did God do (2:2)? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Does this mean that God doesn't do *anything* today? Look at John 5:17. The focus in Genesis 2:1-3 is on rest from his *work of creating*.

In what way did God make this day special (2:3a)? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did he do this (2:3b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- "Holy" refers to being "set apart as special." This one day was set apart from the other six, as having a special significance.
- God would later use this as a pattern for our 7-day week. Under the Old Covenant (given through Moses), Israel was to set aside one day in seven as special - a time to "rest" from daily activities and to focus on God. Under the New Covenant, we have been given "rest in Christ" (Hebrews 4:9-11).

# Some Common Questions about Plants and Animals

## How does the Bible's names and descriptions of plants and animals compare to modern-day names and descriptions?

The names and descriptions are often quite similar to modern-day concepts. But sometimes there will be differences.

- The difference in the concept of a "bird" has already been mentioned. (Technically, the Bible says "flying creature," which is slightly broader than our modern concept of "bird.")
- Another example is the reference to the "cud chewing" animals, listed in Leviticus 11:4-8. The Bible's definition of the concept focused on the movement of mouth parts, not on the nature of the animal's digestive tract. Because of this, the "rabbit" (v. 6) could be included in the list - even though the *modern* definition of "cud chewing" would exclude it.

There are instances in which we do not know for certain the exact identity of a plant or animal mentioned in the Bible. (Some may even be references to creatures that are now extinct.)

## What about Dinosaurs (and similar fossilized creatures) - where do they fit in?

All dinosaurs (and similar creatures) were created during these six days. The specific day would have depended on what type of creature they were.

- This means that they would have been on Noah's ark (if they were birds or land animals). They did *not* have to be full-grown. Also, they weren't necessarily meat-eaters before the Flood (see Genesis 1:30), so Noah and his family would have been safe!
- The description of behemoth (Job 40:15+) fits the descriptions of a dinosaur, better than it fits the description of a currently-living animal. The leviathan (Job 41:1+) is another interesting creature whose description resembles the traditional "dragon" that is mentioned in many ancient cultures... and on up to modern times.
- In the Bible, many of the passages that use the word "dragon" would also make sense if you referred to a type of dinosaur (those that have a "dragon-like" shape). There is no reason to object, unless you wrongfully *assume* that dinosaurs and humans didn't co-exist! (Early English translations didn't use the word "dinosaur," because the word hadn't yet been invented! Most modern translations simply follow the pattern of previous translations, and continue to use the word "dragon.")
- Down through recorded history, there have been reports of dinosaur-like creatures (or "huge lizard-like creatures") - even by people who knew nothing about dinosaurs and had no reason to pretend. Even today there are occasional claims of sightings of dinosaur-like creatures. (Some of the claims are obvious hoaxes, but others seem to be quite credible.) We don't know for sure if these dinosaur-like creatures actually exist today, but if they do, they may be located in some of the dense jungles of the Congo, in the depths of the oceans, or in some other isolated area of the world.

## Why are there so many extinct species of plants and animals (including dinosaurs)?

Many plants and animals probably became extinct soon after the Flood, unable to survive the radical environmental changes that had occurred. Humans have also contributed to the extinction of many species. (This is still happening today.)

## Where do animals go when they die? Will there be animals in heaven?

The reason humans will exist forever is because they are created in the image of God. Animals do not have this characteristic. There is *nothing* in Scripture to suggest that animals continue to exist after their deaths (and a few verses that suggest that they *don't*). If we - the humans - hadn't sinned, it wouldn't be an issue. (If you don't like the fact that they are "gone" when they die, remember this: It's not *God's* fault, but *ours*, that they die.)

- Both humans and animals have "souls." The word "soul" refers to having "creature life" (something more than the type of "life" that plants have), and the words are often interchangeable. The word "soul" (or "being"), used in Genesis 2:7 in reference to man, comes from the same Hebrew word as does the word "creature," in Genesis 1. (Many people mistakenly think that the difference between the two is that people have "souls" and animals don't. This is not the case.)

There will be lots of things in "heaven" (technically, on the *new earth*), but we are not given very many details about them. God tells us what we *need* to know - things pertaining to life and godliness - but not everything we might *want* to know. The only way to find out for sure is to be there. In the meantime, we can trust God, who does all things well.

- There is no statement that says there *won't* be animals.
- The book of Isaiah mentions animals in the "kingdom." Many believe that this refers to a time prior to eternity. Yet it may give us a partial glimpse into what things may be like in eternity.

# The Creation of the Man and the Woman

## Genesis 1:26-31

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food." <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

## God Expresses His Intention - v. 26

What was God about to make (v. 26a)? \_\_\_\_\_

What would be unique about the nature of this "creature"? What would it be "patterned" after (v. 26a)?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Note the expression, "Let *us* make man..." God is saying this to *himself*. In the context of this passage, there is no creature mentioned, who has the ability for conscious reflection - much less a creature who could be an advisor or a "co-creator" with God! Though we could possibly speculate that heavenly creatures might have been created by Day 6, they are not mentioned anywhere in the context as having anything to do with what God was doing on the earth. (More about the word "us," later.)

What would be the unique "job description" for this "creature"? What would he be told to do (v. 26b)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- To do this job, he (they) would have authority over the entire inhabited earth. This would obviously require help - the reason for the command, "Be fruitful and increase in number," in verse 28a!
- What they would do has similarity to what God does. Yet there are also differences: God rules over *all* creation; humans, as God's "image bearers," would rule over *part* of it.
- The word "man" parallels the word "them," in the second half of the verse. This is significant and is explained further, in verse 28.

## THE IMAGE /LIKENESS OF GOD - what does it mean?

Man was created to be *like* God in character, purpose, and (to some extent) nature. The big difference is this: Whereas God (the Creator) has these attributes to an *infinite* degree, humans (created beings) have them to a *finite* degree. We *reflect* God; we are made in his *image*. But we aren't "gods," except in a figurative or symbolic sense. (See Psalm 82:1,6 for an example.) Furthermore, the relationship cannot be reversed: We cannot define God as a reflection of *our* image - something that sinful humans often try to do.

Perhaps the best way to summarize what "bearing God's image" means is this: Man was made to be as much like God as is possible, for a created being. This would apply to both male and female, and would include:

- their mental capacities - an ability to have conscious reflection, and to make rational, free choices
- their moral capacities - an ability to distinguish right from wrong, and to make moral choices
- their spiritual capacities - an awareness of God, and an ability to interact with him

It is because of these capacities, that humans were given authority over the other creatures on the earth, and over the earth itself (v. 26b, 28).

When sin entered the world, these capacities were distorted, but not fully destroyed. Before sin, people reflected God's nature *finitely* (rather than *infinitely*); but now they also reflect it *imperfectly*. It is only through Christ, that our ability to reflect God's nature can be restored to what it was intended to be. (This is an ongoing process and will be completed at the resurrection.)

There are some ways in which *all creation* reflects God's glory, power and "divine nature" (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20), but even these capacities are influenced by the consequences of human sin. They will be restored at the resurrection (Romans 8:20-22), at the same time that *our* restoration is made complete.

## God Fulfills His Intention - v. 27-28

### *First, God creates humans (v. 27)*

What did God do (v. 27a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The main focus in this verse is not on their *bodies*, but on their "*image-bearing*" nature. The bodies were also made, but more detail is given to that aspect in chapter 2.
- Note the differences in the words that are used to describe the various aspects of man's creation. Here, the focus is on the "image bearers" being *created*. In contrast, in chapter 2, the man's body is described as being *formed* from the ground (2:7) and the woman's body as being *fashioned* from part of the man (2:22-23).

The three lines of v. 27 express *parallel* thoughts. The first line uses the word "man."

In the second line, what *word* is used in place of the word "man" (v. 27b)? \_\_\_\_\_

In the third line, what *phrase* is used in its place (v. 27c)? \_\_\_\_\_

- In this third line, the concept that parallels the word "man" includes *both* male and female. It is because *God* defined the word this way (both as a *singular* noun and as a *collective* noun) that most languages (past and present) use the word this way. The modern hostility to the use of the word "man" in reference to *male and female* - mainly in Western societies - is an expression of rebellion against this concept.
- The creation of male and female are described in greater detail in Genesis 2:4-25, and explains the relationship between the two (especially within the context of marriage). This concept is developed further in the rest of Scripture.

## ***Second, God tells humans what they are to do (v. 28)***

- Verse 28 is only a summary. Some additional details are recorded in chapter 2, and the concept is further developed, elsewhere in the Scriptures.
- Note that this command is described as a "blessing" for the humans (v. 28a).

**PART 1** of this blessing involves the humans themselves. Three phrases are used to describe what they were to do, and the extent of it. What blessing (command) were they given, concerning themselves (v. 28a)?

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**PART 2** of this blessing involves the earth. What were they to do with the earth (v. 28b)?

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**PART 3** of this blessing involves the animals. What were they to do with the animals (v. 28a)? [Verse 26 applies this also to the earth.]

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### **Sexuality and the issue of "Man" vs. "Male and Female"**

God did not create sexuality for the sole purpose of making children, or providing physical oneness between male and female - though these are important. He created it to *teach* us, through a physical activity, about various spiritual truths, and about various non-physical aspects of life and reality. He also created it to *reflect the nature of his own being*.

In Scripture, God is described as a "unity" and *at the same time* a "plurality" - "one" and "three." So also, man is described as "unity" and "plurality" - "man" (v. 27a) and "male and female" (v. 27c). Within marriage, the "two" are *at the same time* "one" (Genesis 2:24). However, as with the other ways that humans (and all creation) reflect various aspects of God, this is only a finite reflection of the infinite nature of God. The "two" do not share absolutely *all* aspects of "oneness" in a marriage - especially now that sin has entered the world.

In Genesis 1:26, God says, "Let *us* (plural) make man..." In verse 27, it reads, "So God (singular) created man..." This is fully compatible with the nature of God, as "unity and plurality." There is some debate as to whether or not this was the actual intent of these phrases. However, it does parallel the "unity and plurality" statements about man, which are found in these verses: "Let us make *man* (singular)... and let *them* (plural) rule..." (v. 26); and "God created *man* (singular) ... male and female he created *them* (plural).

### **About the words "Subdue" and "Rule"**

These words do *not* give people the permission to misuse and destroy the environment. They were to learn about it, work with it and use it in a way that reflected *God's* character - a way that honored God and benefitted other people. Implied here (and developed further in Scripture) is *everything* that can be legitimately done with creation. What are these things? In modern terminology, we could describe these things something like this:

- 1) everything that is a legitimate part of science and technology,
- 2) coupled with the more artistic or aesthetic dimensions of creation (the God who created functionality also created beauty),  
and
- 3) done in a way that honors God and builds up other people.

Two examples of this are given in Genesis 2 (working in the garden and learning about the animals). Yet since each person has different gifts and abilities, and the very "context of life" changes from generation to generation, Scripture has a greater focus on teaching *principles* - the mental framework and foundation that makes doing this possible. It also teaches us that, because of sin, it is now our nature to do the *opposite* - to do these things the wrong way (often in a very destructive way). Human effort, by itself, can perhaps suppress some of the detrimental aspects of human nature. But it is only through Christ (and submission to the Word

of God), that we can begin to change back to what God intended, when he made us. This change can begin now, but will not be *fully* complete until Christ returns and restores all things. Until then, even our *best* efforts will be tainted. (See Hebrews 2:5-9 and Romans 8:18-23.)

### Is work a "blessing"?

All of these things mentioned in v. 28 are described as a "blessing." This includes the part of the command that involves *work*. The unpleasant aspects of work did not exist until *after* humans sinned. When that happened, every aspect of this blessing was affected by the well-deserved judgment of God (Genesis 3:16-19). Conditions are made even worse by the sins that people commit against each other (including the *sin* of laziness), and by the way they treat the rest of creation.

## A Final Blessing, and the Conclusion of a Busy Week - v. 29-31

### One more blessing (v. 29-30)

What was this blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was it for? \_\_\_\_\_

- Many changes occurred when sin entered the world (Genesis 3) and destroyed the right relationships that existed between the creatures. The poisonous aspects of plants would have developed as one of the consequences of sin. Also, meat-eating and blood-sucking animals would have developed those characteristics at that time.
- Animals were not given as a source of food for humans, until after the Flood (Genesis 9:3).

### The final evaluation of it all - v. 31

What was God's description of all that he had done (v. 31)? \_\_\_\_\_

### How did things get the way they are today?

Things radically changed when the man and the woman chose to sin. Now, *both* live in ways that cause conflict and pain, not only with each other, but also with the entire creation they were supposed to rule over.

We live in an age of rebellion - first, against God, second, against other people. This rebellion permeates to the very core of our being, and distorts our whole framework for interpreting reality. God described the nature of the relationships between male and female, and between humans and creation, as "very good." Yet today, people's thoughts and actions have become so distorted, that the relationships (as they are described in Genesis) are often viewed as "*not* good," or sometimes even as "a great evil." Even the *words* used to describe these relationships (such as, "subdue" or "helper," or in the New Testament, "submit") have become so distorted, that, to many people, they *never* convey something "very good."

The relationship between the man and the woman (husband and wife) is a good illustration of this. Consider the following description of their relationship, as God defined it. How often do you hear people describe that relationship this way?

- God created the man and the woman to work together as *one*, neither against the other, with the man as the leader and the woman as the helper. Since there was no sin, there was no competition and no attempt for either to promote self-serving interests, to the detriment of the other. *Both* were attempting to obey God, working together, each with abilities that complemented the other.

How should we respond to all these broken and distorted relationships? How should we interact with each other and with all of creation? Throughout Scripture, we can find instructions and examples that illustrate the right way for people to interact (in *any* type of relationship). We can also see examples of *wrong* ways for people to interact. (The context will show us which is which.) We need to learn from what Scripture says, and begin to do things the right way.

# The Creation of the Man - More Details

## Genesis 2:4-17

<sup>4</sup> This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens-- <sup>5</sup> and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup> but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground-- <sup>7</sup> the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup> Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

## The Man and the Garden (2:4-17)

In Chapters 2 and 3, we are given only a few details about this garden and what the humans did there. We may be curious about other details, but we can rest assured that what we *need* to know, God has told us.

### *A Summary of What Happened (2:4-7)*

- Verse 4 introduces the "account" or "history" of what happened in the earliest years of human existence. This includes some of the things that happened during the Creation week, as well as various events that occurred in the years that followed.
- The word "day" occurs in verse 4 ("in the *day* that the LORD God created..."). Since it is *obvious* that it is being used symbolically, many translations will use the phrase "when" or "at the time" ("*when* the LORD God created...").
- Note the word "LORD" (all capital letters, in most translations). This indicates God's Hebrew name, "Yahweh" (or "Jehovah"). Most translations use the word "LORD" (instead of the actual name), patterned after the method used in the Septuagint (an early Greek translation of the Old Testament).
- Verses 5 and 6 are difficult to translate (compare translations, if you wish), but they basically tell us that certain things didn't exist (v. 5), and then God made them (v. 6). The focus is *not* on the specific "literal day" in which these various things were done.

What did *not* originally exist on the earth - at least before "Day 3," of Genesis 1:11-12 (v. 5a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Since this summary does not focus on the *chronology* of the creation week, we cannot tell if this is intended as a description of conditions *before* "Day 3," or if it refers to conditions that existed only in a specific geographical location *after* that.

Why were these things originally not present - two reasons (v. 5b)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did God deal with the *first* issue (v. 6)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The water source was a mist or stream (depending on how the Hebrew word is interpreted). This could refer to a heavy dew forming at night, or to springs of water coming up from underground aquifers. Either way, *it does not mention rain* as a solution to the problem. Many believe that rain might not have occurred until *after* the catastrophic environmental changes that occurred at the time of the global flood (Genesis 7).
- If rain *didn't* occur until after the flood, the word "rain" could have been inserted by Moses (guided by God), as he was writing down an accurate description of these events. He would have taken the *pre-flood* account (from Adam) and written it down in terms that would be understood in *post-flood* conditions.
- If this passage refers to springs of water, they might have been the source of the river mentioned later in the passage (v. 10).

How did God deal with the *second* issue (v. 7)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Though plants could *survive* without the man, the purpose of the man was to take care of them - to work with them and to encourage their growth in a way that would enhance their value to both people and animals (v. 15).

### ***The Creation of the Man (2:7)***

- Compare this verse to Genesis 1:26-27. In chapter 1, the emphasis is on humans being created in the image of God. In chapter 2, the greater emphasis is on the physical aspect of their creation.

Where did his body come from (2:7a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- In Old Testament Hebrew, the name "Adam" comes from the word that means, "to be red" - alluding to the color of the soil from which he was created.

What did God do to this body (2:7b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This was an act of special attention that *none* of the other creatures received. Man's "breath of life" came *directly* from God himself.

What was the final result (2:7c)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This "living being" was different from all other "living beings," in that it bore the image of God. This characteristic is what makes it unique from all other creatures.

## ***Details about the Garden Itself (2:8-9, 15)***

- This would be the man's home (v. 8). The text does not tell us when it was "planted" - perhaps on Day 3, or perhaps just before the man was put there.

What was the man's "job description" (v. 15)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This was *not* a small garden, with neatly-arranged rows of flowers, vegetables, and trees. It could have been *huge*, like a large park or "nature preserve," containing all sorts of plants and animals. It was large enough to contain a *river*.

All kinds of vegetation (such as those which are mentioned in v. 5) were probably present. But of special interest were the trees.

All the trees are described as having two characteristics. What are these characteristics (v. 9a)? \_\_\_\_\_

There were also two trees that had special significance. What were they called (v. 9b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- What made them special? It wasn't that they tasted better or looked better than the other trees. (*All* the trees had these types of characteristics.) Instead, it was this: Whereas the other trees would benefit humans *physically*; the purpose of these two trees was to benefit them in *non-physical* ways. The humans *needed* these trees, in order to develop their ability to reflect God's nature and character, as God's "image-bearers." *Yet for this to happen, they would have to respond to the trees in the way that God instructed them to respond.*
- These two trees both have significant roles in human history. Collectively (while still in our original parents), we, the human race, ate from the one tree at the beginning of this *present* age - Genesis 3. Individually, we, the *redeemed* human race, will eat from the other tree at the beginning of the *next* age (on the new earth) - Revelation 22.

## ***More about the Rivers and the Land (2:10-14)***

The rivers mentioned in this passage would have helped solve one of the "problems" mentioned in v. 5b (the original absence of water in the land). One river flowed into the garden, coming out of the land of Eden (v. 10). From there, it apparently split into four rivers. We know nothing else about these rivers, other than the names of the regions they entered.

What were the names of these rivers (v. 11, 13-14)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Do any of these names sound familiar? They might... but it does not necessarily prove that the *modern* rivers having those names are in the same locations as the *pre-flood* rivers.

Though the details are few, what little we are told reveals a land rich in natural resources.

What were some of these natural resources (v. 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Important Instructions about the Trees (2:16-17)***

Which trees could be used for food (v. 16)? \_\_\_\_\_

Which tree was to *not* be used for food (v. 17a)? \_\_\_\_\_

Why (v. 17b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Here they are told the proper response to the first of the two special trees. In order for humans to develop in their ability to reflect the nature and character of God, they must respond properly. Because of the nature of this command, *either* response (eating or not eating) would have consequences.
- At this point in time, they did not have to respond to the tree of life. (Perhaps that tree hadn't yet borne any fruit.)

## **Where Was the Garden of Eden Located?**

In the description of this garden, some of the rivers and geographical regions have names we are familiar with - such as the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, the land of Cush (the upper Nile region) and Assyria (modern-day Iraq and some of the adjacent areas).

We must remember that we are reading about the world *before* its devastation by the global flood (7:11+). In Genesis 7, we are told that it wasn't just a "rain," but a massive "deluge" - comparable to what would happen if a "floodgate" were being opened. In addition, we are told that the waters *under* the earth violently "burst forth" - an event that would have been accompanied by massive earthquakes and volcanic activity. In addition to all this, the earth could have been hit by a large number of meteors. Though not mentioned in the Genesis account, there is much geological evidence to show that this has happened at some point in the past, and the flood is the only major *geological* catastrophe that has ever occurred in the history of the earth. (People who wilfully ignore the *fact* of the global flood - 2 Peter 3:5-6 - may invent speculations about other supposed catastrophes, but their speculations are only fictitious.)

What is the significance of all this? The geographical areas described in Genesis 2 might not exist any more. Because of this fact, we *don't* know (and *can't* know) where the Garden of Eden was located.

Why would some *modern* rivers and locations have the same names as those mentioned in Genesis 2? Perhaps the most likely reason would be this: After the flood, as the human race began to spread out, they had to give names to places. It would have been quite natural for them to use names they were already familiar with, instead of inventing all *new* names! [This would be similar to what happened when Europeans began to migrate to what is now called the United States. They often named places, using the names they were familiar with, back in Europe.]

- In the future, there is going to be another major devastation - then, by fire (2 Peter 3:7-13). Again, there will be major ecological changes. Though we are told a few details about what it will be like (see an example in Revelation 21-22), we will have to wait until that time, to see what most of the changes will be.

# The Creation of the Woman - More Details

## Genesis 2:18-25

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,'  
for she was taken out of man."

<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

<sup>25</sup> The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

## Fulfilling a Need (2:18-20)

The events recorded in these early chapters of Genesis are not mere "stories," designed to show us "timeless principles." They are historical facts, a record of what God did. They *do* teach us truths and principles about reality, but that is because God planned what he would do in a way that would illustrate those truths. Even the events which happened *after* sin entered the world are presented in a way that teaches us truths about reality. (The apostle Paul understood this and showed that these facts should influence the way people live. See 1 Timothy 2:13-14 and 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 12.)

God created male and female in such a way that, working *together*, they would be best suited for reflecting the nature and character of God, as God's *image bearers* (Genesis 1:26-27). Though they have much in common, each has unique capabilities that the other does *not* have. When they work together, each encouraging the other, they both become more capable of fulfilling the glorious task to which God has called them. The way this relationship was created is the focus of this passage. (Unfortunately, the way much of its beauty and harmony was destroyed is the focus of chapter 3.)

### *The Need (2:18)*

At the end of Day 6, we read that everything God created was "very good." Yet what was the condition like,

while the man was still *alone* (v. 18a)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was still needed (v. 18b)? \_\_\_\_\_

## What is a "helper"?

- It was God, not the man, who used this word "helper," to define the purpose or function of the "creature" he was about to create. After sin entered the world (Genesis 3), people began to distort (or rebel against) this concept, so that today we rarely see it being fulfilled in the manner that God intended. Yet modern-day distortions of this relationship do not define what *God* intended when he gave us this passage, and we should not let them influence the way *we* interpret it!
- Today, people often give the word "helper" a connotation of *inferiority* to the one being helped. Such was *not* the case here! In this context, the word has connotations of being a "partner" or "companion." (Some translations will use these words.) When we look at other Scripture passages, we discover that the Hebrew word translated as "helper" is commonly used in reference to *God* helping people (see Psalm 70: 5 and 115:9-11). Obviously, there is no inferiority implied in that!
- The phrase that is used to describe the relationship of this "helper" to the man is "*suitable* for him." It can also be translated as *corresponding to* him, *matching* him, or *right for* him. She would reflect and complement him in a way that no other created being would be capable of doing. The two would go together - not just physically, but in every aspect of life.
- The man's leadership role is *not* based on any supposed "superiority" over the woman, for (as shown in the following verses) the *two* were to work together as *one*. The man's gifts and abilities would be *complemented* by the woman's gifts and abilities - resulting in an awareness of her value and importance. Knowing this would result in a humble spirit, rather than an attitude of superiority!

Based on these things, what is a "helper" (as the word is used here)? \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Man Learns about His Need (2:19-20)*

What was the man's assignment (v. 19-20)? \_\_\_\_\_

- In this passage, the word "all" is used in the sense of "all kinds of," or "all that were present in the garden." He didn't need to examine *every* species on earth, to get an understanding of his need!
- Before sin entered the world, it was *normal* for God to personally interact with people - the Creator with his creatures. In the book of Revelation, we are told of a future day, in which this will happen again.
- Scripture often uses nature to teach us. (Many of Jesus' parables are examples of this.) In Genesis 2, the man could observe that each of the species brought to him came in groups of two, and that the two *complemented* each other. Then, when he considered himself, he would realize that *his* complement was missing.
- In Old Testament Hebrew, this word "man" is the same word as "Adam." At some point in the account, it seems that there is a transition from simply referring to him as "the man," to using that word as his name. Translations will sometimes vary, as to which English word they use in a specific passage. But either way, it communicates the same message, and refers to the same person.

What was the man's conclusion, at the end of this assignment (v. 20b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- What does it mean to "name" something? The Old Testament concept of "name" had a greater significance than it often does today. (Names conveyed a lot more meaning.) The man didn't merely blurt out some syllables! He would have studied the creatures (even if just briefly), and given them names that expressed something about them. Because of this, the name would *represent* the creature.

## *God Provides for the Need (2:21-22)*

What was the man's "contribution" (v. 21b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Verse 23 suggests that this would have included both bone and flesh. Also, it didn't have to be an entire rib!
- After this "surgery," there was a complete (and painless!) healing.

What did God do with these "parts" (v. 22)? \_\_\_\_\_

- God had the *ability* to do anything he wanted, to make the woman. But he chose this specific method for a *purpose* - to teach us about the relationship between husband and wife (and to some degree, between male and female).
- Today, sin influences (and fractures) every aspect of human relationships. This makes it difficult for us to fully appreciate God's purpose and design in what he did. Yet the more we understand these things, *and the more our own attitudes change from being self-focused to being God-and-others-focused*, the more we will be able to interact in harmony, and in a way that enhances each other's ability to reflect the nature and character of God.
- Adam *needed* his wife. But this "need" was totally unlike the "need" that people often express today - a desire to use another person for the fulfillment of one's own desires.

## Understanding the Significance of What God Did (2:23-24)

### *The "Oneness" of the Two (2:23)*

What did Adam understand, as far as the *origin* of this newly-created "being" (v. 23a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The phrase, "This is now," could also be translated as, "This one!" or perhaps, "Now at last!" Perhaps we could loosely translate the line as, "Now at last! My counterpart!" Adam had now found the complement to himself - a counterpart who would be "part of him" in a way that the animals could *never* be.
- How much "one" were they? They were the *same* "bone and flesh"!

What did he call this newly-created "being"? Why (v. 23b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Just as he had given names to the animals, indicating that he understood their significance, so also he named this new "creature," who was designed to be his counterpart. He *understood* why God had made her.
- In Hebrew, the words "man" and "woman" sound similar (*'ish* and *'ishah*). The emphasis here is on male and female. The word used in previous verses (which is the basis for the name "Adam") comes from a different word, that can refer to humans collectively (regardless of gender).
- Adam *acknowledged* the significance and importance of what God had done. He did not *invent* this relationship.

### *The Significance for Future Generations (2:24)*

This event in the garden was to *define* the nature of marriage and sexuality *for all future generations*.

What was the man to do (two things - v. 24a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Note that verse 24 is *God's* explanation of the significance of marriage. (Matthew 19:4-5 also affirms this fact.)
- In marriage, the man's temporary "union" with his parents (as a child) was to be broken and replaced by a permanent union with his wife.
- In future generations, these "man-woman units" would not come into existence the same way as it happened here (the woman from the man's side). Nevertheless, the "oneness" of those relationships - which involves every aspect of their interaction with each other - would be patterned after it. It was to be *as though* they were biologically the same "being." The man would not live (and use his wife) for himself; the woman would not live (and use her husband) for herself. (Sin has fractured these relationships, so we don't often see them functioning the way God created them to function.)

What would be the result of these two actions (v. 24b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Obviously, the term "one flesh" focuses on a physical relationship. Yet this physical "oneness" was created for the purpose of reflecting the non-physical "oneness" that was to exist between the two. When such a relationship degenerates into nothing more than physical activity, it loses all its significance; and the two become not much different than animals in their conduct (and sometimes *worse* than animals). When this happens, *neither* has the capability to experience the fullness of the relationship that God created.
- Adam and his wife understood the reproduction aspect of sexuality; after all, God taught them about it. (Otherwise, he couldn't have told them to "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth," in Genesis 1:28.)
- *God* defined marriage and sexuality. Humans - whether individuals or governments - have no right or authority to do this! Our obligation is to simply *accept* what God said and grow in our understanding of it.
- Note that this statement about marriage is not a *command*. Remaining *unmarried* (without committing sexual sin) is a perfectly acceptable alternative, and at times can even be considered a *gift* (see 1 Corinthians 7:1-9). However, if marriage *does* occur, then God's "definition" defines what it must be. (Anything else is a distorted perversion, encouraged by one's corrupt sinful nature.)
- This statement in Genesis 2:24, implies a *permanency* to marriage. They are now *one* - and *joined by God* (Mark 10:6-9; Malachi 2:13-16; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11+; etc.).

## Living in a Sinless World (2:25)

What two terms are used in this passage, to describe the condition of the man and his wife, before sin entered the world (v. 25)? \_\_\_\_\_

At that time, being naked implied innocence and purity. The physical condition reflected the non-physical realities. Had they *not* sinned (Genesis 3), things would have continued this way, and there would have been no need for us to wear clothes today.

Today, we need clothes because we *aren't* innocent and pure. The significance of nakedness has changed, because of sin, and those who try to go around without clothes are living a pretension and a lie! Because our natures have become corrupt, we *need* clothes.

Sin has totally warped our concepts of nakedness and shame. We cannot even *think* clearly about these concepts. Today, if someone suddenly stood in front of us naked, our initial reaction would be nothing like what it would have been, before sin entered the world.

In Genesis 3, we read that the need for clothes was the result of our gaining an understanding of good and evil. But it wasn't the *knowledge* of good and evil that caused the problem. Rather, it was the way that we (the human race, collectively, in our first parents) chose to get it - by doing the *evil*. (Either choice would have resulted in understanding the difference.) Now, we are all sinners by *nature*, and every time we sin, our actions confirm this choice. We may begin our lives appearing to be rather "innocent," but we still have a sinful *nature*. As we grow older (and as we grow in our understanding of good and evil), we choose to follow the inclinations of our nature. And because of this, our *wrong* response to nakedness - a reflection of our heart condition - increases. (This is why very young children don't respond the same way that older children and adults do.)

It is important to realize that the ultimate issue goes far beyond the presence (or absence) of a covering on our bodies. Sin influences one's total comprehension of reality, starting at the foundation of how we think. It changes our love for *anything* into a type of lust (self-centered desires) and self-gratification - and this is not just in sexual matters, but in *all* areas of life. It results in the fracturing of *all* one's relationships - with God, other people and all of creation. It leaves us naked and exposed in the presence of a holy God... and in need of a covering that extends to the very depths of our souls.

Nevertheless, even in this condition, there is hope. Just as various other "physical entities" in this account of creation are presented in a way that can teach us non-physical and spiritual truths, so also this "physical" need for clothes teaches us non-physical and spiritual truths - such as our need to be "clothed" with righteousness (Romans 13:14 and Revelation 19:8).

# Sin Enters the World

## Genesis 3:1-8

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

<sup>4</sup> "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

## The Serpent Confronts the Woman (3:1-5)

This event did not have to happen immediately after the events in chapter 2. It could have occurred several years later.

### *The Serpent Distorts God's Word (3:1)*

How is the serpent described (v. 1a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The focus is on its character, not its physical appearance. The fact that the serpent was later "cursed" to an existence of crawling on the ground (v. 14) might suggest that it had a different form before that. Scripture doesn't tell us, because its original physical appearance is not the important issue.
- The word translated as *crafty*, *cunning* or *subtle* (depending on translation) is quite interesting, because it can imply something either good or bad. As used here, it implies something evil. Yet the same word is used elsewhere in a *positive* manner - in the sense of being *prudent* or *sensible*, as in Proverbs 14:8. It all depends on how the "mental skill" is being used.

The snake questions Eve about something God said, but he does so in a crafty, perhaps confusing way. He makes it sound as though he misunderstood God's command about what Adam and Eve could eat in the garden. He gives the impression that they weren't allowed to eat from *any* tree in the garden.

Review what God said in Genesis 2:16. What did God permit them to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the only exception to the rule (2:17)? \_\_\_\_\_

Here in Genesis 3:1, what did the serpent seem to think God said? ("Did God really say this?") \_\_\_\_\_

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- A talking animal? *If* it was *natural* for animals to talk in a way that could be understood by humans, then that ability ended when sin entered the world. More likely, the serpent talked because it was empowered by the Devil (called the "ancient serpent," in Revelation 12:9). Note that the Bible mentions another instance of a talking animal - Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:27-30) - and it did so because it was empowered by the Angel of the LORD.

### ***The Woman Responds (3:2-3)***

She corrects the serpent's mis-statement. What does she say God permitted them to do (v. 2)? \_\_\_\_\_

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She also explains the exception to the rule, describing it in two ways. What did she say was prohibited by God (v. 3a)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did she understand would be the consequence of violating this prohibition (3b)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- A careful comparison of what she says (in this verse) to what God said (in chapter 2) reveals some differences in wording. Some people interpret these differences as an indication that sin was already beginning to occur in her heart - that she was adding to God's command (the phrase "don't touch it," which is not mentioned in chapter 2), and that she was toning-down the severity of the consequences ("you will die" compared to "you will *surely* die"). It is more likely that she was simply stating the command in her own words, without any intent on distorting it. Scripture does not describe this event as an act of sin, but clearly states that it was sin when, being deceived, she chose to eat the fruit. (This occurred a short time *later*.)
- Note that God's instructions in chapter 2 were given to *Adam*. The woman hadn't been created yet! Adam may have been the one to tell Eve about the instructions.
- At this point in time, the woman has not been given the name "Eve." (That happened later - see v. 20.) Here, she is just called "the woman." With only two of people present, there wasn't yet much need to distinguish between people by *name*!

### ***The Serpent Denies God's Word (3:4-5)***

The serpent is attacking the woman's nature and character as an "image bearer" of God. (See Genesis 1:26-27.) This is not a *physical* attack, but an attack on the *intellectual, moral and spiritual* levels. His previous statements may have already started to confuse her, but now he will leave her deceived (an attack on the *intellectual* level), impure and corrupt (an attack on the *moral* level), and unable to have fellowship with God (an attack on the *spiritual* level).

What was his claim (v. 4) \_\_\_\_\_

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What did he say would happen, if Adam and Eve ate the fruit (v. 5)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- It may seem that eating a piece of fruit is a *little* matter, but our willingness to obey God in something *little* reflects the way we will respond in something *great*. See Luke 16:10.

Note the progression.

- The serpent first introduces *confusion*, by raising a question about what God said, and misquoting God in the process.
- Then he introduces *deception*, by claiming that what God said is *not true* - and that God even *knows* it is not true. He claims that God is withholding something good, to prevent Adam and Eve from becoming more like him.

Is there any truth in what the Devil said? The answer is *yes!* But it's a *half-truth*.

- Would she instantly die *physically*? No, but she would instantly die *spiritually*.
- Would she know the difference between good and evil? Yes, but her nature would become corrupt and she would lose the natural inclination for doing good from a pure heart.

Ultimately, it is an issue of *authority*. Who is Eve to listen to and obey? The serpent? or God (or her husband, if he relayed God's command to her)?

## The Sin is Committed (3:6-7)

### *The Woman Gives In to Temptation (3:6a)*

Eve is being tested. Who is she going to listen to? An *animal*, who she was created to have authority over, or *God* (or her *husband*), under whose authority she had been placed? She had been told that the consequences of taking the fruit would be *bad*, but now the serpent was telling her that the consequences would be *good!* In the end, she listened to the serpent, who tricked her by using half-truth (and perhaps confusion) to get her to believe a lie.

What was Eve was tricked into believing, about the fruit on that tree (v. 6a)?

- 1) She became convinced that the fruit was *like* the rest of the fruit in the garden, in *two* ways. What were these two ways? (Compare this verse to Genesis 2:9.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2) She became convinced that the fruit was *better than* the rest of the fruit in *one* way. What was this way? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

So how did she respond to the temptation (v. 6b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- She originally told the serpent that they were to neither *eat* nor *touch* the fruit. Now she has done *both* of these things.
- What should she have done? Listen to those in authority *over* her, not to a creature that was created to be in submission *below* her. She got things backwards. Later, her husband did the same thing (v. 6b), but for different reasons.

### *The Man Joins the Woman in Sin (3:6b)*

Did Adam know of the events that had just occurred? Where was he when all this was happening? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- He might not have been there the *entire* time this was happening, but he at least witnessed what happened at the end of the conversation. His presence would remind her that she had to make a choice about who's authority she would accept.
- Some have suggested that Adam should have stopped Eve from listening to the serpent and taking the fruit. But the issue was much deeper than Eve's *visible* reaction to the serpent. Reaching out her hand to take the fruit was but a reflection of the choices already made in her *heart*. Had Adam physically restrained her, she still would have been guilty of *choosing* to do what the serpent had suggested.

What did Eve do, that tempted her husband to sin? \_\_\_\_\_

- There was a difference between Adam's testing and Eve's, for Adam wasn't *deceived* by the serpent. His choice was a *deliberate act of disobedience*, with the full knowledge that he was going directly against the command of God.

How did Adam respond to this temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

- Just like Eve, Adam had to choose who he would pay attention to: God (who had authority *over* him) or his wife (who was *under* his authority). He had to choose which one he would side with: his God or his wife.
- What should Adam have done?
  - As an expression of love for God - which Jesus says is our *greatest* obligation - he should have listened to God, rather than to his wife. God himself tells us this, in verse 17.
  - As an expression of love for his wife, he should have volunteered to accept the punishment his wife now deserved (death) *in her place*. This is not directly stated here, but Scripture tells us that doing so is the greatest example of love a person can have for another (John 15:13).

## The Immediate Consequences of Sin (3:7-8)

### *The Relationship between The Two Is Destroyed (3:7)*

To what extent was the Serpent correct, in saying that their eyes would be opened, and that they would understand good and evil (v. 7a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- What the serpent said was partly true (a *half* truth). The problem was in what he *didn't* say.
- Either choice (eating the fruit or not eating it) would have resulted in an awareness of the difference between good and evil. Had they obeyed God, they would have understood the difference with a *pure* heart, mind and conscience. But because they chose to disobey, they ended up understanding the difference with a *corrupted* heart, mind and conscience. This is the reason for what happened next:

What did they also understand, about themselves (v. 7b) \_\_\_\_\_

- Nakedness originally implied purity and innocence. (See Genesis 2:25.) Now it gains a different significance. The problem *wasn't* that their *bodies* changed. Rather their *minds* and *hearts* - the very foundation of thoughts and actions - changed.
- Because of sins' effect on the mind, they needed clothes *even though no other people were present* with them.

What was their response to this realization (v. 7c)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This has often been interpreted symbolically, as representing a *human* attempt to cover-up the consequences of sin. In reality, only what *God* does (compare to v. 20) will suffice. Their relationship with God (next verse) is not helped one bit, by their attempts to cover up their nakedness.

### *Their Relationship with God Destroyed (3:8)*

How did they respond, when they realized that they were about to face God? \_\_\_\_\_

- Before they had sinned, direct interaction with God was apparently a common thing. Now, it would never be the same. Before, there was purity; now there is guilt. Before, there was joy; now there is terror. This joyful relationship - involving direct, face-to-face fellowship with God - will not occur again, until God's people experience it in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:4).

# The Consequences of Sin (Part 1)

## Genesis 3:9-15

<sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all the livestock  
and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust

all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

and you will strike his heel." *[to be continued.]*

## God Confronts Adam and Eve (3:9-13)

### *God Asks Them Where They Are (3:9-10)*

What does God ask Adam (v. 9)? \_\_\_\_\_

- When God questions Adam and Eve, it is for *them*, not for himself. God already knows everything, but he is interacting with the humans on their level.
- Adam's response suggests that the intent of God's question isn't so much to find out *where* Adam was hiding, as to allow Adam an opportunity to reflect on his condition and on *why* he was hiding. It is an opportunity for Adam to acknowledge his sin.

What did Adam say was the reason that he hid from God (v. 10b)? \_\_\_\_\_

Was nakedness the *real* reason they were afraid and were hiding? Consider this: At the end of chapter 2, it didn't bother them to be naked (v. 25)! \_\_\_\_\_

- To be fully truthful, Adam should have said he was hiding because he was guilty of sin.

When the serpent approached Eve, he used half-truths to deceive her and to cover-up his real intentions. Here, as well as in the answers that follow, Adam and Eve will *both* attempt to do the same thing with God. (They will not succeed.) On a spiritual level, they now belong to the Devil's "family," and they are following the example of their "father," the Devil.

- Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of *his* day, for doing the same thing - following their "father," the devil (John 8:44).
- Through Christ, we have an opportunity to once again become "Children of God" (1 John 3:1-3).

### ***God Confronts Adam with His Sin (3:11-12)***

In response to Adam's answer, what was God's first question to Adam (v. 11a)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Look back over chapter 3. Did anyone *tell* them that they were naked? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, then how did they find out (v. 6-7)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

God's second question focuses more directly on the *real* issue. What did he ask (v. 11b)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does Adam admit that he ate fruit from the tree (v. 12b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Though Adam had no choice but to admit that he sinned - something God already knew - he does not simply say, "Yes, I ate some of the fruit." *Neither* of them does this. Instead, both try to shift the blame to someone (or something) else and excuse (or at least reduce the significance of) their own conduct. Sin now affects their actions, and *neither* wants to take full responsibility for his own choices.

How does Adam excuse his actions? Who does Adam blame (v. 12)? (Note that he gives *two* reasons for what he did!) \_\_\_\_\_

- Ultimately, Adam blames *both* the woman and God (who put her there with him). It is our nature, as *sinners*, to not want to take full responsibility for our conduct.
- Was there truth in what he said? Yes! But it was only a distorted *part* of the truth. He downplayed the importance of the more serious issue.

### ***God Confronts the Woman with Her Sin (3:13)***

What does God specifically ask the woman (v. 13a)? \_\_\_\_\_

Background: In verse 6, we read that she did *two* things. What were those two things? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What two things does she mention in her answer to God (13b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- What she said about the serpent was true, but not quite what God asked about. It may have been a legitimate detail in her explanation, but she omitted the more important matter, about offering the fruit to Adam. If she hadn't offered the fruit, he probably wouldn't have eaten it.

There is a significant difference between the sins of the two.

- Eve was *deceived* into believing the serpent's lie. She was confronted by what she believed were two "truth claims." She chose to believe what the serpent said, and then she willingly chose to disobey God.
- Adam was *not deceived*: When offered the fruit, he knew that he had to choose either his wife or God, and that he could not have both. He chose to side with his wife, and willingly chose to disobey God.

**Something to think about:** Are there any parallels between the way *you* tend to respond when you are confronted with your sins, and the way *they* responded when they were confronted with their sin?

## God's Righteous Judgment against Sin - Part 1 (3:14-15)

Sin always has consequences, including effects on those who did not commit the sin. It's the same today, as back then. In Genesis 3, the sin of the man and the woman effected *all* of creation (Romans 8:22). Nevertheless, there would be some consequences that applied only to those who were directly involved in committing the sin.

### *Consequences for the Serpent (3:14-15)*

Two entities are addressed in this judgment: The physical animal, and the spiritual force that empowered it (compare to Revelation 12:9). Though, to some degree, *both* entities may be implied in both verses, the primary emphasis changes from the physical entity (v. 14) to the spiritual (v. 15).

It is God's desire to bless his creation. But sin is a rejection of all that God is; so there *must* be consequences for it - namely, the *opposite* of blessings. It is only because of God's *undeserved kindness*, and his promise of a future victory in Christ (mentioned here only in general terms), that *anything* good can remain in creation.

What would happen to the animal itself (v. 14)? \_\_\_\_\_

There are specific consequences for the animal that brought the temptation. It would "crawl" and "eat dust" (symbolically, not its actual diet). This would be a picture of physical humiliation, or being made "lower" than the other animals. This is especially significant, when we consider what it was originally like: Before this, the creature was more "crafty" than the other animals (perhaps implying more capabilities than the others); from now on, it would be more humbled ("cursed") than all the rest.

- This is strictly a *physical* judgment. Snakes do not consciously think about being "cursed"!
- Scripture does not tell us what the serpent looked like before the judgment. We are told just what we *need* to know about the event, not what merely satisfies idle curiosity.
- God, consistent with his nature, has designed the snake in its present form to be fully adapted to its role in the environment.

The second part of this judgment goes beyond the *physical* entities of snakes and people. The focus changes to *spiritual* entities. What is the attitude described in the first part of v. 15? \_\_\_\_\_

- This verse tells us that there would be a hostility between the various individuals and groups mentioned in the passage - and that this hostility would be placed there by God.
- The hostility that often exists between people and snakes (especially poisonous snakes), is a reminder or picture of the hostility that has always exists, in one form or another, on a spiritual level.

This would be an *immediate* attitude between which two individuals (v. 15a)? \_\_\_\_\_

This would be an *ongoing* attitude between which two groups (v. 15b)? \_\_\_\_\_

What would be the final outcome of this hostility (v. 15c)?

- For the serpent (not a reference to his offspring) - \_\_\_\_\_
- For the offspring (a specific one: "he") - \_\_\_\_\_

How should we understand this passage? Is it a prophecy about an ongoing conflict between humans and snakes? Of course not! There is a much deeper significance to this judgment - a significance that goes far beyond mere snakes and humans. The focus has shifted from the *physical* entities to the *spiritual* entities they represent - and to the ongoing battle between them.

This is not the only time that something like this occurs in the first three chapters of Genesis. *Many* of the things mentioned have a significance that goes beyond (yet includes) the immediate physical entities. Here are some examples:

- Light and darkness (Genesis 1:4) teaches us about various concepts, such as the incompatibility of truth and error, and of good and evil (John 3:19; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8).
- Jesus Christ is the "last Adam," who accomplishes for his spiritual offspring something that the "first Adam" failed to do for his physical offspring (1 Corinthians 15:45).
- The relationship between Adam and Eve *defines* the nature of marriage (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-8) and even has implications regarding the issue of divorce. Yet it also teaches us about the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:30-32).

Here, in Genesis 3:15, the word "offspring" - also translated as "seed" - is an example of this. When we attempt to understand the nature of this offspring (or seed), we discover that the word can refer to a single collective *group* or to a single *individual*. Which one is it here? As we read the verse, it seems that *both* are included: The middle of the verse seems to focus on collective groups, but the word "he" at the end of the verse seems to focus on an individual. Though there are two radically different types of offspring (the Serpent's and Eve's), within Eve's offspring, we see reference to both the individual and the collective group.

The full significance of this "offspring" concept is not stated in this verse. Instead, it was progressively revealed, down through the centuries, as more of God's truth was given to us in Scripture. This would include direct statements about the issue, as well as accounts of events that illustrated the conflict.

This same historical account (from Genesis 2:4 to 4:26) records an event that occurred only a few decades later, which illustrated this conflict: the occasion in which ungodly Cain killed righteous Abel. Many other Scripture passages would follow, which focused on this same issue, for hostility between the wicked and the righteous is an *ongoing* reality. Many centuries later, the apostle John could refer back to this original concept of two types of "seed," and would use Cain's example to illustrate what he was saying (1 John 3:7-15), for the wicked "seed" is *constantly* trying to destroy the righteous. In the end, however, the righteous will prevail. Even now, through the power of God, the Devil (the "Serpent") is being crushed (Romans 16:20), at least symbolically, in the lives of God's righteous "seed."

Ultimately, this hostile conflict reaches its climax in the struggle between Satan (the "ancient serpent" - Revelation 12:9) and Christ ("born of a woman" - Galatians 4:4). This final conflict may be seen, at least in part, in the third section of Genesis 3:15. Jesus Christ accomplishes the final "death blow" that seals the serpent's fate forever. Yet in the process, he also has to suffer, in his death on the cross. Yet since his death on the cross was only temporary (because of the resurrection), he becomes the final victor.

This whole passage is one about judgment. Yet in the midst of this judgment - a *necessary* judgment against sin - there are prophetic implications of hope. The hostility exists because a righteous "seed" *does* exist - a "seed" whose ways are utterly incompatible with the ways of the serpent's "seed." It exists because *God* makes it possible. In the end, the righteous "seed" will have the victory over the serpent and its "seed" - and this is the reason that all hope is not lost.

# The Consequences of Sin (Part 2)

## Genesis 3:16-19

<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said,

"I will greatly increase your pains in  
childbearing;  
with pain you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you."

<sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, "Because you listened to  
your wife and ate from the tree about which I  
commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat of it  
all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup> 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's Righteous Judgment against Sin - Part 2 (3:16-19)

As with the consequences for the serpent (3:14-15), the implications of this judgment are far-reaching. The impact goes far beyond the two people in the garden.

### *Consequences for the Woman (3:16)*

As a wife, the woman was created to be a *helper* and *companion*. As a mother, she was to be a source of *life*. Before sin entered the world, both of these relationships would have been joyful and fulfilling. Now they would become difficult, frustrating, and characterized by the word "pain." Both relationships would be marred by her sin.

What would the consequences be, as far as bearing children was concerned (v. 16a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- The word "childbearing," in the first part of this verse, can also mean conception. Since conception itself is not painful, it may symbolically refer to the *entire process* of raising children, from start to finish. If so, the indication would be that the whole "mothering process" would be characterized by frustration and sorrow. [Think about it: How often is a mother frustrated by disobedient children! If sin had never occurred, children would naturally *want* to obey - and would do so with joy! It is only by the grace of God (which restrains our tendency to sin) that there is *any* joy in raising children!]
  - Some believe that this passage implies an increased frequency in childbearing, perhaps to compensate for the fact that death is now a factor.
  - The physical pain of childbirth would not have existed, if sin had not entered the world. The process of bringing life into the world would have been a joyful event. But the act that once brought life and joy now brings sorrow, trouble and death - and the very process of childbirth reflects this sorrow and pain.
  - Today, when a child is born, he is already *spiritually* dead. Throughout life, the child will endure sorrow and frustration, and will eventually die *physically*. In the end, there is the danger of an *eternal* death.
  - By nature, we are born corrupt and dead in sin. We do not deserve times of joy and happiness. We do not deserve the offer of eternal *life*. For these, we have only God to thank.
  - The word translated as "pain" is the same word that is used in v. 17, to describe the painful toil that the man would experience. It can also include emotional pain - which is often more distressing than the physical pain that accompanies it.

What would be the consequences, as far as the woman's relationship to her husband was concerned (v. 16b)?

---

This passage indicates that the relationship between the man and the woman is now fractured. Yet the specific details, as described here, are difficult to understand. Interpretations vary, but it may simply refer to an increased insecurity and a greater need to rely on her husband, in a difficult and troubled world.

- A wife relying on her husband may be difficult to understand, in some parts of Western society, where - compared to people in the rest of the world - men and women both have lives of relative ease and security. (We may want to believe that this is not so, but very few of us would trade what we have, for the conditions that *most* people in the world experience every day of their lives.)

### ***Dealing with a Difficult Passage (3:16b)***

The word "desire" is difficult to understand. The Hebrew word occurs only three times. The two other passages where it is found are listed below. What do these passages say?

Genesis 4:7 - \_\_\_\_\_

- The last part of this verse also contains the same word "rule," that is found in 3:16b. (Some translations may use "master," "overpower," etc.)

Song of Solomon 7:10 - \_\_\_\_\_

- Song of Solomon was written many centuries later, so it is possible that the meaning of the word might have changed slightly (something that can happen in *any* language). In contrast, both Genesis passages are found in the *same* historical account of the early years of human history (an account which extends from 2:4 to 4:26).

To make things more complicated, there is no verb to indicate whether it is *future* tense perhaps indicating some type of desire that would be common among women of all generations), or *past* tense (referring to Eve's desire to get Adam to join her in sin).

### ***What are some of the interpretations of the word "desire"?***

The following three views illustrate the wide range of interpretations that exist:

- A desire *for* a husband - either a response to the increased insecurity that exists in a difficult and troubled world (the husband would be a leader and protector); or an increased desire for his companionship.
- A sexual desire - perhaps an increased desire to have *children*. (Note that the concept of "sexual" can include much more than just the *physical* aspect of sexuality.)
- A desire to control, or to usurp her husband's authority - either referring to Eve's *past* act of giving the fruit to Adam (and all the things she may have done to influence his decision), or to an *ongoing tendency* among women.

### ***How should we respond to this passage?***

We may be confused by the varying interpretations that result from the uncertainties mentioned above. Yet, there are some things we *can* know. This Genesis statement is found within the context of judgment for the *woman's* sin. Because of what she did - which included sin against her husband - the relationship between the husband and wife (to some degree, men and women in general) would be influenced. Most likely, this passage has some type of focus on one of these issues: insecurity, submission, conflict, or some combination of the three.

We now live in a world that is fractured by sin. When we look at things around us (conditions, circumstances, broken relationships, etc.), we see many things that wouldn't have existed in a perfect (sinless) world. Some of these things exist because sin is *present* in the world; others because sin must be *judged*. All of these things are now part of life, and one of them - even if we don't know which one - is referred to in this passage.

Perhaps the most important thing for us to realize is this: The statement is not a command! If it were a command, and we misunderstood it, we might be in danger of responding incorrectly. But since it is just a statement of *fact* (the uncontrollable "way it will be"), a wrong interpretation of the passage doesn't change how we are to live. It will not lead us into a wrong response.

- If it involves an *unavoidable* consequence of sin, there is nothing we *can* do or *should* do. (We can't change it.)
- If it involves something that *can* be influenced by our actions, we should turn to the rest of Scripture to find out how to respond. There are no commands in this verse, but there are *many* commands found elsewhere in Scripture. If we pay attention to such commands, they will show us how to interact with others. They will guide us in the way we should live.
- Either way, this passage cannot be used as a *justification* of wrong actions (by *either* gender).

### ***What about the word "rule"?***

Depending on our interpretation of the word "desire," the word "rule" could work *with* the desire, or *against* it. This passage may be referring to the fact that, under normal conditions, the woman will have a greater reliance on her husband (in a world that is now cruel and filled with trouble), than if she hadn't sinned. It may also be part of the *consequences* she must experience, because of her sin against Adam: Since she ruled over him, in trying to get her to join in the sin, he will now be given the *responsibility* to rule over her.

- In the New Testament, we are told that the wife must *submit* to the husband's rule, and the husband must *cherish and love* his wife. Verses such as these are *commands* - unlike this verse in Genesis. When each obeys these commands, and fulfils his obligations to the other in the way God requires, there will be harmony, and each will benefit from the relationship. When *either* fails to do so, there will only be conflict and increased trouble.

### ***What can we learn from this passage?***

This verse illustrates how to deal with difficult passages. Sometimes there *are* legitimate questions about the interpretation of a passage in Scripture - genuine questions about the meanings of words or of textual variations. Yet this *never* occurs in a passage that would cause a serious problem for knowing how we should live. Because of this fact, we do not need to be over-concerned about reaching the "right" viewpoint in such a passage. Nor do we need to condemn someone who reaches a different viewpoint. It will be sufficient for us to reach some basic conclusions, based on what we *can* know with certainty, and leave it at that.

Finally, we can praise God for the way he protects the *message* of his Word. Though there *are* verses that we do not fully understand (such as this one), God has protected what we *need* to know - passages intended show us how to live, define our perspective of right and wrong, and lead us to salvation. What we *need* to know is clear enough, that when a person claims it *can't* be understood, it's usually because he doesn't *want* to accept what it says.

### ***Consequences for the Man (3:17-19)***

As an "image bearer" of God, the man was created to work with creation and to develop it in meaningful ways that reflected the glory of God. His task - which originally would have brought joy and fulfillment - would now bring sorrow and frustration. It would be characterized by the word "pain," and in the end, all his efforts would come to nothing. Ultimately, his own body would be returned to the dust from which he came.

- The woman would experience some of these consequences, but since the man was given the *primary* responsibility to work with the land, the statement is directed toward him.

In order for Adam to sin, he had to make a decision. He was faced with two alternatives. Who did he choose to listen to (v. 17a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- As used in v. 17a, the word "listen" may have the connotation of "obeying" or "submitting" to Eve, when she attempted to get him to join her in sin. She didn't "innocently" hand a piece of fruit to him, but did everything she could to tempt him, to get him to join her. He was faced with a dilemma: Should he follow his *wife* - who was a *part* of him (see chapter 2) - or *God*, who made him?
- Afterwards, Adam may have had resentment for the dilemma his wife put him in (perhaps suggested in v. 12, by his statement that the temptation came through the *woman* who God put there). But in this passage, God places the blame where it belongs. No matter what Eve may have done to tempt him, Adam had to make the final choice of what he would do. Eve didn't *force* him to sin.
- This passage does *not* mean that it is *always* wrong to listen to one's wife, or that she *never* has anything good to say!

Why was the ground cursed? Who's fault was it (v. 17b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Sin has consequences that go beyond the immediate participants. *Never* forget this fact!
- Just as the curse on creation was the consequence of the sinful actions of a man (Adam), so also the restored blessings on creation - Romans 8:19-21 - will be the consequence of the righteous actions of a man (Jesus Christ).

What was one of the ways the ground would be cursed (v. 18a)? \_\_\_\_\_

- This concept of "thorns and thistles" is probably symbolic of *all* the negative consequences that occurred to creation, other than those specific consequences already mentioned.

How would this curse on the land effect the man (v. 17c, 19a, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

- The immediate focus is on the man's work as a food-provider. However, the curse effects *all* things in the world, so it influences every work-like activity we may be involved in. This verse is the starting point for all the hard and strenuous labor that is often a part of "work" today. This is the reason for all the frustration, when things don't go the way we expected. Before sin changed things, work would have been a joyful blessing, with *none* of the negative side-effects that we see today.
- Though often painful and difficult, work is still good and necessary. It must be done in a way that honors God and benefits other people. A person who is too lazy to work, or who does it in a poor manner, is sinning against both God and people.

How long would they experience this curse (v. 17c, 19b, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

What would be the final end, after a life of painful toil (v. 19b)? \_\_\_\_\_

- After a life of painful toil, we lose it all. This *fact* is the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. *We cannot* get lasting meaning out of such a life - even when that life contains moments of joy and happiness! Ultimately, we must get our meaning from *God*, the "reference point" that goes far beyond our short "life under the sun."
- God created us from the dust. Yet it was not his intention for us to return to dust. That was *our* doing.
- The focus in this passage is on *physical* death, for *spiritual* death had already occurred (when they ate the fruit). *Spiritual* death, our separation (alienation) from God was already a fact. *Physical* death, the separation of our body from our spirit, would take longer to occur.
- Sickness is a part of the long-term process of death. Don't be surprised when you get sick... it's only part of the curse that we brought upon ourselves (and upon other living creatures).
- Through Jesus Christ, our *spiritual* alienation from God can be removed; we can pass from death to life. Those who experience this restoration to *spiritual* life will also someday experience restoration to a *physical* life that can no longer experience death.

# Starting Over Again

## Genesis 3:20-24

<sup>20</sup> Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup> After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Responding to God's Judgment (3:20-24)

God created a perfect world, but humans chose to sin. In doing so, they destroyed both themselves and everything that surrounded them. Spiritual death came immediately, but physical death took longer. Because of that, there is time to respond. There is a new start - a sad start, but one that contains a seed of hope for the future.

#### *Adam's Response: Naming His Wife - Possibly Implying Trust and Hope (3:20)*

What did Adam name his wife? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (In Hebrew, the name "Eve" sounds similar to the word "Living.")

As seen in chapter 2, the concept of "naming" something had to do with learning and understanding its significance. Adam understood Eve's significance. Though she had been instrumental in bringing *death* into the world, by God's grace, she would also be instrumental in bringing *life* into the world.

- Adam's act of naming his wife stands in stark contrast to the curse and death the two had just brought into the world, and may suggest that they understood God's *grace* in the situation, and the hope implied in verse 15.
- Adam's reference to "life" probably implies *more* than just *biological* life. Eve would be the mother of all who would receive *spiritual* life - those who would oppose the "seed of the serpent." Furthermore, the very *source* of life - Jesus Christ - would come from her.

#### *God's Response: Providing and Protecting (3:21-24)*

How did God deal with their nakedness? How did God provide for them (v. 21)? \_\_\_\_\_

- Many believe that the "garments of skin" implied a sacrifice, and taught Adam and Eve about the need for a sacrificial atonement for their sins.
- As seen before, physical nakedness had spiritual implications - it is not merely a *physical* phenomenon! That is why their response to nakedness changed so greatly, when they sinned. In this verse, God's act of *clothing* them also has spiritual implications. There will be an ongoing need for their sins to be "covered," so that the shame of their guilt will not remain exposed. Throughout the Old Testament, animal sacrifices will be needed as a *temporary* measure, until Jesus Christ comes to provide the perfect sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 10).

- In the New Testament, the concept of "clothing" is used to illustrate many spiritual principles. We read about "putting on" or "being clothed with": Christ (Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27), the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11), the "new self" (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10), various godly character traits (Colossians 3:12), etc.

What (besides death) occurred because Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree (v. 22a)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Though they became *like* God, as far as knowing good and evil was concerned, it was from an *evil* perspective. (Had they *not* eaten from the tree, they would have known good and evil from a *righteous* perspective.)

Because of this, what would God have to protect them from (v. 22b)? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Why did God need to protect them?

- Eating from this tree, as a *sinner*, would have accomplished the *opposite* of what they expected. They would have been forced to live *forever* in a state of *death*, separated from God and from his blessings. Salvation (which is possible only through the *death* of Jesus Christ) would have been impossible.
- If, physically, they were *unable* to die, that doesn't mean life would have been a pleasurable experience. They were already *spiritually* dead - separated from God - and this would influence the nature of the "life" they would have experienced, had they eaten from the tree of life. Most likely, pain would forever increase, as injury and age took their toll. As the effects of human sin impacted everything around them, God's blessings throughout *creation* would diminish until they disappeared. As this occurred, the very concept of living would become a horror. Ultimately, unending "life" (if you could call it such) as a hopelessly lost sinner, would be like "hell on earth," and probably not much different from what the unrighteous will experience in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).
- Under such conditions, what would happen if a person's body was crushed and essentially destroyed? We cannot comprehend what it would be like to *not* be able to lose consciousness. Perhaps the non-physical aspect of the human being would experience unending, unrelenting pain. Whatever the case, we can be thankful that God didn't let us find out!

What did God do to *Adam and Eve*, to protect them from this tree (v. 23)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- In the garden, God had provided a plentiful supply of food for them. Now they would have to work much harder to get it.
- This verse is directly related to the judgment of v. 17-19, not only in reference to the issue of "working the ground" (which would become a much more difficult task than before - v. 17), but also in reference to the humans coming from, and returning to, the ground (referring to death - v. 19).

What did God do to *the garden*, to protect them from this tree (v. 24)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- As sinners, it would have been *natural* for them to go after the tree of life, even if they knew the consequences would be horrible. (It's no different than the attitude people tend to have today, when they are tempted to sin.)
- Cherubim (plural for "cherub") are among the heavenly creatures who serve God. Other than the possible descriptions in Ezekiel 1 (compare to chapter 10) and Revelation 4:6-8, we don't know much about them. Up to the time of Noah, when the global flood occurred, anyone who would have traveled to the location of the garden would have seen these creatures standing there, guarding the tree.

This is not the end of the story... but just the beginning. Many horrible things will happen, because of sin and its consequences. But in the end, there will be a *new* (restored) earth... *and the tree of life will be freely available to all the righteous who are there* (Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14).

# What Do We Learn from Genesis 1-3?

## *Does It Matter? (Or: The Reason People Often Attack These Chapters)*

Genesis 1-3 is the foundation for all the rest of Scripture. The early chapters of Genesis not only demonstrate God's *active* involvement in what happens in creation, but they also form the basis for many of the foundational teachings of Scripture. In doing so, they speak directly against many of the lies that are being promoted today, often by people who are supposed "experts" in their field.

This is why these chapters are so frequently attacked by enemies of the Bible. If they can undermine these three chapters (as well as the account about the global flood, in Genesis 6-8), then they can undermine our faith. Of course, they *cannot* really undermine these chapters in Scripture. God's Word stands firm and accurate. But it is just as we read in the introductory lesson (about 2 Peter 3:3-7): The time would come, in which people would *deliberately* ignore the *facts* about the creation and the flood. This *willful forgetfulness* - not reliance on facts - would be the basis for their mockery and attacks on God's Word.

## *An Accurate Account of Past Events: History*

All the rest of Scripture *presupposes* the factual accuracy of these three chapters. All of the apostles and prophets who refer to something in these chapters (directly or by allusion) treat them as *fact* - not as fiction or myth, nor as mere symbolism that shouldn't be taken literally. Though much symbolism was later developed, based on these chapters, the chapters themselves are considered factual, and an accurate historical description of events that happened in the past.

Simply stated, these chapters tell us what happened. Scripture tells us that these chapters are factual history. God has spoken, and any other opinion or "theory" is simply false - a lie.

## *The Starting Point for Many of the Bible's Teachings and Commands: Doctrine*

These chapters provide the foundation for many of the teachings and commands found in the rest of Scripture - explanations and instructions that pertain to truth, reality, and everything else in life. Many statements found here are either directly quoted, or are alluded to, as apostles and prophets revealed further revelation from God.

This does not mean that every doctrine is fully developed in these chapters. Scripture was given to us *progressively*, with new revelation building upon what was previously revealed. As God revealed further truth (a concept called *progressive revelation*), the various concepts found in these chapters (sometimes directly stated, sometimes implied or just hinted at) were further developed. Truth that was already revealed wasn't nullified or cancelled, but was reaffirmed and built-upon, or sometimes (such as with a promise) fulfilled.

## **Teachings That Are Introduced in These Chapters**

Here are some examples of various foundational teachings and answers to basic questions about life, that originate in these three chapters:

- **About God:** 1) Who he is. 2) His relationship to creation and to humans.
- **About Creation:** 1) How it came into existence. 2) Its original condition. 3) The reason that decay and death now exist.
- **About Humans:** 1) How humans - male and female - came into existence, and the significance of this fact. 2) Why people were created; the purpose for their existence. 3) The relationship between humans and the rest of creation; the difference between humans and animals. 4) The relationship between male and female - especially husband and wife; the significance of this relationship, and the effects that sin has had on it. 5) The definition of marriage. 6) The significance of nakedness - before and after sin entered the world.

- **About Sin:** 1) How it originated; whose fault it is. 2) Its seriousness. 3) The reason for pain, sorrow, death and decay. 4) How sin affected all of creation. 5) Its effect on human nature.

## Teachings That Start Here, but Are Further Developed at a Later Time

Most of the above concepts are directly stated. Yet there are other concepts that are only implied, or which are present in a rudimentary form - just a basic "starting point" for what would be more fully introduced later. We see some examples of this in the events of chapter 3: Though the immediate focus is on what occurred when sin first entered the world, there was more significance to what happened, than just the immediate event. Various concepts and promises which are expressed in this chapter are later expanded and developed, as more of God's Word became revealed. Adam and Eve probably realized that these events had far-reaching implications, though they wouldn't have understood their full significance.

One of the terms that illustrates this is the word "offspring" (or "seed") in verse 15. Though, at first, there may have been a greater focus on Eve's immediate "offspring," (her children and perhaps the struggle that would occur on a spiritual level), various concepts that grow out of this verse are also implied - culminating in the ultimate conflict between one specific "offspring" (Jesus Christ) and Satan. These additional aspects of the promise, though growing out of these verses, would not be fully understood until they were further explained at a later time. Symbolically, we could compare it to a small seedling that would grow and eventually mature into a fully-developed tree.

Here are some of the implied concepts - introduced in these chapters (sometimes vaguely), but more fully developed at a later date: 1) Our need to trust God and to accept what he says as true. 2) The concept of "rest" from one's daily activities and devotion to God. 3) The concept of sacrifice and atonement. 4) The struggle between the righteous and unrighteous "seeds" - including a specific "seed" who would one day come, known today as Jesus Christ. 5) The promise of a future hope. 6) Judgment and the "end times" - specifically, a "conclusion" to the conflict. 7) The existence of spiritual forces, including evil spiritual forces.

## Using These Chapters to Teach about Other Truths: Parallels and Symbolism

There are many instances in which God *designed* physical and non-physical entities to *parallel* each other, so that the one would illustrate or teach us about the other. For example, the *physical* union between husband and wife (chapter 2) was designed to illustrate the *non-physical* oneness that was also to exist. Such parallel concepts were created together, and *both* aspects are important. We need to pay attention to the physical entity and learn from it, so that we will better understand the non-physical entity.

Scripture also uses facts and events in a *symbolic* way, to explain new or difficult-to-understand concepts. For example, the "light" and "darkness," mentioned in Genesis 1, can be used symbolically to teach a number of different concepts. It is important to realize that a *symbolic* use of such facts and events, developed at a later time, does not mean that the original usage of those words is also symbolic! The symbolism *builds on* the physical or historical reality; it doesn't *define* it.

## What about Our Unanswered Questions?

The early chapters of Genesis give us just about all we know about the early world - not only before sin entered the world, but after it did, up to the time of the earth's destruction by the global flood. We tend to have a lot of questions and speculation about various things during this part of the world's history. Yet we are given very little information about it - only a few chapters and an occasional reference found elsewhere in Scripture.

We should be content to realize that, as with the rest of Scripture, God has given us what we *need* to know, rather than what we *want* to know. We can find out the answers to any other questions we may have, in eternity (if we really care to ask). We have what we need for life and godliness - and that is all we *need* to know!