

## Genesis 2 – Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

It's a common question by skeptics on why there appears to be 2 *different* creation stories – one found in Genesis ch. 1 and the other in ch. 2.

The answer is simple – they aren't *different* stories; they're the same.

Ch. 1 is a *brief overview* of the days of creation while ch. 2 gives us a focused and more detailed description of the *creation of man*.

In ch. 1 we find just the simplest review of what God did on each of the days of creation.

The main point of this is to bring us to the first verses of ch. 2 which detail the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

### CHAPTER 2

**<sup>1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup>Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.**

Don't forget that the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible were added much later.

And those that added them often placed them at the most inappropriate place.

Such is the case with the first 3 verses of ch. 2; they ought to be part of ch. 1.

These verses describe the first week of the Creation, which ends with the 7<sup>th</sup> day, a special day that God blessed & set apart as special. The Hebrew, in which these words were penned, makes it clear that the creation was *completed* when the 7<sup>th</sup> day *began*.

So we might wonder why there was a 7<sup>th</sup> day and not just a return to Day 1.

Up to this point it's all been about God's creative work spread over 6 days.

So why not, now that that creation is complete, start over again with a new week?

Why add a day when no work is done?

The answer to that is because the 7<sup>th</sup> day was the *goal* or the *focus* for the previous 6 days; they were all *aimed at* finding their conclusion & fulfillment in that 7<sup>th</sup> day.

This is why God blessed the 7<sup>th</sup> day and set it apart.

And notice that whereas the first 6 days were all marked off by the formula, "The evening and the morning were the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> . . . day," we don't see that for the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

The reason why is because the creative agency of God continues to be complete; His rest from the work of creation continues.

It's easy to read through chapter 1 and the days of creation and draw the conclusion that what we find there is a kind of "rising order of creation" from the simple to the more complex and important.

There's the setting of the world stage, the creation of plants, then simple creatures, then more complex animals and finally man who stands at the peak of creation because he's created in the image of God.

But man is not the peak or ultimate of creation – there's one more act of God that will finalize and cap-off the creation – the 7<sup>th</sup> day!

When it says that God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day – it does not mean He was tired and needed a break.

The word simply means to cease from labor.

Isaiah 40:28 makes it clear that God does not grow weary

**Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary.**

The rest of God on the 7<sup>th</sup> day implies that God was ending His work to enter a new phase in His relation to the creation – and that was to *enjoy* it.

It's the picture of a craftsman who finishes making an elaborate yet sturdy rocking chair.

It's now complete – so he places it on the ground, and sits in it!  
He *enjoys* the fruit of his labor.

That's the picture here of the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

The work of creation is complete and God now *adds a day*, the final day, as a time to enjoy the creation.

This final day becomes a part of the creation order – in fact, really, it's the whole POINT of the creation!

This is why God blessed the 7<sup>th</sup> day and sanctified it.

When something is sanctified, it means it's set apart for God's special use and purpose.

Because of this, a 7-day week becomes a part of the creation-cycle; it's built into the very fabric of the creation.

Historically, we see this 7-day pattern repeated again and again in the cultures of the world.

There have been some who've tried to alter it, as in the French Revolution when they tried to throw off every last vestige of Biblical faith and go to a 10-day week.

But all such attempts to alter the 7-day week have been fruitless. While the word "Sabbath" is not used in this passage, the Sabbath is based on the creation-order.

In Exodus 20 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment we find this -

**8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.**

The word "Sabbath" means "rest" and is derived from the word we find here in Genesis 2:2.

It's part of God's order and plan that man *enjoy the blessing* He installed in the creation by setting aside the 7<sup>th</sup> day as a day of rest & renewal.

In Exodus 31, God established the Sabbath as the sign of His national covenant with Israel.

He made observance of the Sabbath a memorial and marker of the unique agreement He and the nation had – just as circumcision was a sign of the promise to Abraham.

The Jews, in an attempt to safeguard the observance of the Sabbath and make sure no one violated its command to avoid work, wrote highly detailed rules on what constituted work.

This code of the Sabbath became so vast and detailed it placed a heavy burden on the people and what God had intended to be a blessing became a curse.

When Jesus came, He said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” [Mark 2:27]

The NT makes it clear that what the OT Sabbath day *began* has now been *completed* in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Faith in Him brings us rest from a life of trying to earn our way into God’s presence through the *works* of the law.

Christ IS our Sabbath.

So, while we don’t have to observe the Sabbath as a religious duty, it’s still wise for us to understand that 6 days of work and 1 day of rest is part of the very fabric of creation.

For health’s sake, we ought to take one day in every week to rest and renew ourselves by ceasing from our usual labor and giving ourselves to the enjoyment of God’s creation.

There’s one more thing we ought to note before we move on; we find it in v. 1 –

**Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.**

Last week I mentioned that the Bible isn’t a scientific textbook – its aim is not to give a highly detailed description of the universe from that perspective.

And yet, when it speaks to an issue of science, it’s accurate and reliable – even when it goes against the conventional wisdom of the day.

For instance – most of the ancients believed the world was flat.

Yet in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC the prophet Isaiah referred to the earth as a sphere. [40:22]

When the different nations of the world believed the earth was held up by camels, or elephants, an alligator or a tortoise, Job said that the Lord hangs the earth on nothing. [26:7] Statements like this have caused the philosophers and learned men of previous ages to laugh at scripture.

But as science has progressed and discovered the truth, the Bible has been affirmed as accurate time and again.

V. 1 of ch. 2 is a profoundly interesting statement for what it implies about the physical universe.

It says that God finished His work of creating.

This verse squares *perfectly* with the established laws of science, the most basic of which are the *laws of conservation of mass & energy*.

*The First Law of Thermodynamics* states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, it can only change form.

The creation account of Genesis 1 and these first vs. of ch. 2 imply this exactly; that God created all the matter and energy in the universe and then ended that creative work.

Having created all matter and energy – which we see in 1:1-2, God then set certain laws to govern that physical universe.

*The Second Law of Thermodynamics* states that it's the nature of energy to move to a state of equilibrium.

Also called the *Law of Entropy*, it refers to the fact that energy tends to spread itself out evenly over space unless there is a continual influx of new energy building it back up.

Here's a simple way to demonstrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics –

What happens if you turn on the heater in your house and close all the vents except the one on the living room?

The heat is going to come out of that vent and go where?

Throughout the whole house!

The Law of Entropy says that that is what happens in nature – that left to itself, energy will flow from the higher to the lower place until the level of energy is uniform throughout.

Another way to describe it is that left to themselves, things will go from a state of order to disorder.

If I take a pack of marbles and put them on a sheet of plywood in the shape of a square, and then walk around the church

here will those marbles reorganize into the shape of a dog?  
Not, they will move at random and adopt a random shape.  
No amount of shaking will ever bring those marbles into any  
kind of a coherent shape.

It's contrary to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics.  
So the THEORY of evolution is flatly refuted by a LAW of  
Physics!

And yet the Fall and God's promise that death would come  
when man rebelled fits perfectly with the Second Law of  
Thermodynamics.

**4This is the history of the heavens and the earth when  
they were created, in the day that the LORD God made  
the earth and the heavens, 5before any plant of the field  
was in the earth and before any herb of the field had  
grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on  
the earth, and *there was no man to till the ground*; 6but  
a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole  
face of the ground.**

Verse 4 is where Ch. 2 ought to begin.

The clue to this is the phrase "This *is* the history of the heavens  
and the earth."

The word "history" is "*tholedoth*" and means "generations."

It's used as a section heading 11 times in Genesis and always  
marks the beginning of a new record. [5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27;  
25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2]

Some scholars believe that Moses took some early records or oral  
traditions that had passed to him compiled them into these first  
chapters of Genesis.

This was how he marked off the beginning of a new account.

In any case, Ch. 1 is the account of creation.

Ch. 2 begins the history of the earth.

And right off we're told that earth conditions were very different  
than they are today.

There was no rain, but there was a constant mist that saturated the  
air and ground with moisture.

As we saw last week, the thick vapor canopy that surrounded the  
atmosphere would make just such a mist possible and would

provide for lush vegetation when God did create it.

**7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**

In Ch. 1, we simply read that God *created* man – no description of *how* is given there.

Here we find some of the details filled in.

God started with the dust of the ground and *fashioned* a body for man.

The word “formed” is used in Jer. 18 to describe the work of the potter forming a vessel.

Since man is made of the “dust of the ground” (Psa. 103:14), the metaphor of a potter working in clay is fitting.

Man’s connection to the *earth* is that his body is made of the same stuff – dust.

The Hebrew for **man** is *adam* and comes from the word for **ground** - *adamah*

But there is far more to man than just his body.

Once the physical body was ready, God **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.**

God imparts to man something that was not “of the earth” but rather had its origin in and from Him – His very breath.

In both Hebrew and Greek there is one word for breath & spirit.

What God is doing here is giving man a spirit by touching him with His own Spirit.

The point for us to glean here is that man possessed a level & kind of life the animals did not have.

With the impartation of the spirit – **man became a living being.**

The word “being” is *nephesh* and is translated in other places as “soul,” or “person.”

It’s also rendered as “desire,” “appetite,” “emotion,” or “passion.”

Now, here’s what’s interesting - the same Hebrew phrase is used of the animals in 1:20, 24.

Animals have souls – that is, they possess life that knows desires and appetites.

They may even have rudimentary emotions like fear, or contentment.

I tell you what – my dogs sure do seem to be passionate when we come home after being away all day or when I’m holding a ham bone just out of their reach.

But the difference between the creation of man and the animals is that man’s soul comes as the result of the merging of his spirit with his body.

We never read that the animals have a spirit; the life they possess is a simple kind of soul that has only one aim that is survival.

Man is different because his soul, his desires and emotions are the *result* of the spirit’s infusion of the body.

We’ll see how this plays out in dramatic fashion in our study next week.

**<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

By *eastward* we don’t know if Moses means eastward from where God fashioned the first man, or eastward from where this was originally penned.

Regardless of where it was, God set aside a special place for Adam then moved him there.

V. 9 doesn’t contradict what we read in ch. 1 about the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of creation when the plants were made - this is merely describing God’s construction of Eden.

So all of this takes place, of course, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day.

Eden was a *region*, and in that region God framed an *enclosure*, which is what the word “garden” originally meant.

Today, a *garden* refers to some little part of the yard we set aside for flowers and special ornamental plants that we treat with care.

But throughout most of history a garden was small plot of ground enclosed with a fence of some kind.

The Garden of Gethsemane wasn’t some yard filled with flowers – it was just a fenced in plot – an olive press actually, because that is what the word “Gethsemane” means – olive press.



The garden in Eden was simply a plot of land God enclosed and filled with great beauty and provision for Adam's delight and sustenance.

The word "Eden" means *pleasure* or *luxury* and that's precisely the environment God placed the first man in - a beautiful place that delighted the senses.

Two specific trees are mentioned in the garden – the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

These will play an important role later.

**10 Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.**

Coming out of the region of Eden was a river that watered the garden.

Once it left the garden it split into 4 branches.

The way these rivers are described leaves you with the impression this was recorded by an eye-witness.

There's a good chance that Adam or one of his descendants wrote this.

And while there's a good bit of geography given here, trying to identify these rivers with contemporary rivers is fruitless because the Flood radically altered the geography of the earth.

The reason why some rivers are still called by these names is because Noah and his sons used the old names for the new rivers they found after the flood.

**15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.**

Many people have the mistaken notion that work is the result of the Fall.

Work and labor are not a part of the curse; where the curse comes in is in unfruitful, unproductive work!  
The original man, before sin ever entered God's good earth, was given a job to do - tend and keep his home.  
Even though God had enclosed the garden and set every good tree in it, man was delegated the duty of *tending* to it.  
We're left with the impression that God is calling man into a *partnership*.  
God *creates*, and then man *stewards*.  
Because man is created in the image of God, he possesses the capacity to *use* the creation in a way that carries on in the mode and motif God established and which brings God glory.  
Think of the garden - it was filled with plants whose nature it is to grow.  
When God created it, it was perfect & good.  
The undirected growth of those plants could easily move toward chaos and disorder as all of us know who have yards.  
So God gave Adam the task of channeling the growth of the plants in such a way that the goodness of the garden was maintained.  
The word "put" here in v. 15 refers to the act of setting something in its intended place where it is at rest.  
When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden, He was setting him in the place where he was meant to be.  
His task of taking care of the garden was a part of what God intended for him as a man.  
In other words – work is a part of God's plan for man.  
Yes, he is to refrain from work on the Sabbath, but the other 6 days he's to do what? WORK!  
In v. 15 the garden is called the "Garden of Eden."  
In Gen. 13:10 & Ezek. 28:13 it's called the Garden of the Lord.  
This wasn't Adam's garden – it was God's. Adam was merely the gardener.

**16**And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; **17**but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

This is the first occasion of God speaking a specific command and it

comes in reference to man's diet.

Adam can eat of any and all the trees save one.

Think of it, virtually unrestrained freedom!

God first declares *all* that Adam is *free* to do – all the trees are fine for food – all but one.

About that one, God makes it real simple – don't eat! For if you do – you die!

Now – there is no doubt which tree God was referring to.

It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Why did God make the tree of the knowledge of good and evil if Adam wasn't going to be allowed to eat of it?

Because for Adam to be a creature of free will, there had to be a *choice*.

It wasn't merely a case of giving Adam the opportunity to show his *disobedience* – without such a choice as this there was no opportunity for him to show his *obedience*!

If there is never a command, never something *forbidden*, then there can never be choice.

And choice was crucial to this whole venture because without choice there can be no genuine love.

God wants our love and obedience to Him to be the love and obedience of *choice*.

So there had to be the opportunity to exercise choice.

Just the *name* of the tree ought to have been enough to forever scare them off.

**The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

That which is evil is that which is *harmful* – that's why it's evil, it brings pain and sorrow.

Adam already knew good – he just didn't know evil.

He lived in the midst of the epitome of good, he bathed in what was good, he breathed it, ate it, drank it, smelled it, walked in the midst of it and laid down at night in a soft bough of it.

His thoughts, every waking moment of his existence were saturated by what's good.

All Adam knew about evil is that it was knowledge he didn't have and didn't need.

Oh to live in such innocence and blessed ignorance!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

How many of us here tonight wish there were some evil things we

*didn't* know.

How many of us would like to erase some picture or memory from our minds?

All of us have some tree of knowledge we'd like to lay an axe to and cut down.

God told Adam – **don't eat of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

If I said to you don't take this drill to your molar, would you then be tempted to come up here after study and do so? **HARDLY!**

And yet, make no mistake, the command of God to Adam about eating of the tree is every bit as clear to him as this to you!

WHY did Adam and Eve do it then?

We'll be considering that very thing in our study this coming Sunday.

**18** And the LORD God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.*"

All we've studied so far took place *before* the creation of Eve.

And though everything has received the pronouncement from God of being good – now He sees something that is not good – that Adam is alone.

The solution is a companion; someone like him – but different to the point that she can help him with his problem of being alone.

As we saw Sunday, while God sees the problem, Adam is blissfully ignorant of it at this point.

So God does something to make Adam realize his need . . .

**19** Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

**20** So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

In naming the animals, Adam quickly came to realize that all of them had a mate; there was a male and female of each of the animals.

But none of the animals proved a suitable companion for him.

No doubt it was then that Adam realized while he was superior to

them in terms of the level of his life and capacities, he was inferior to them in this regard. And as he began to feel the first pangs of loneliness, God then took action to meet his need.

**21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.**

The story is told that as Adam was walking around the garden enjoying the beauty and glory of his new home that he began to feel the pain of not being able to share it with anyone.

God saw his loneliness and said, “What’s the matter Adam?”

Adam said, “God, don’t think I’m ungrateful or anything, but this place is so beautiful and such a delight I want to be able to share it with someone.”

God said, “Adam, let me tell you what I have planned. I’m going to make from you a woman who will be your wife. She will cook for you and clean for you. She will wash and iron all your clothes. She’ll bear your children and never wake you up in the middle of the night to feed or change them. She’ll always be available whenever you need her and will never complain about anything. She’ll never have a headache. She’ll be the first to back down and admit you are right in every dispute. And finally, she will give you a foot rub every night before you go to bed.”

Adam said, “Wow Lord! That’s awesome. What’s a woman like that gonna’ cost me?”

God said, “An arm and a leg.”

To which Adam replied – “Oh! Well what can I get for a rib?” And the rest is history.

Here in v. 21 we read that God took one of Adam’s ribs to make Eve. Actually the Hebrew word used here is an archaic one that we aren’t really sure of.

The translators render it as “rib” because of a lack of anything else to think of as coming from Adam’s side.

But the word is an intensely interesting one in light of what we

now know about genetics.

It's the word tsaòla - and means "curved."

Very early the word came to be associated with the materials of construction and the buildings they constructed.

This word is used for the small storage rooms that lined the temple, rooms called "cells."

In light of all we know now about genetics and all that the science of cloning has taught us, what we may be seeing here is God taking a cell and some DNA material from Adam and manipulating it to produce the woman.

Think about it – what is DNA but a *curved* molecule that contains the genetic material from which a person is derived.

However God did it – Once Eve was fully formed, he brought her to Adam, awakened him and . . .

**23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."**

Adam's remark certainly sounds as though he's identifying she was drawn from his very substance.

And as we saw on Sunday – Adam doesn't name her as he does the animals.

By naming the animals he'd shown his dominion over them.

Adam GIVES Eve his name – he is "ish," she is "isha," the feminine form of "ish."

**24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

**25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**

These verses are crucial to our understanding of what God intends for marriage and that's why we looked at them in depth this last Sunday. If you weren't here, I'd encourage you to get a copy of the tape or CD.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let me end with this –

In v. 18, God said it was not good that the man was alone – then we read the story of the creation of Eve.

At the point God said man's aloneness was not good; sin had not yet infected the creation.

The image of God in man was unmarred - and yet God still said man's aloneness was not good, man was incomplete.

I think we see in this a huge clue as to why God created in the first place.

You see, just as man, created in and bearing the image of God, needed a companion – could it be that God, dwelling in eternity, wanted a companion too.

And that what we see in the drama of Eve's creation is a picture of what God is doing in the creation of mankind?

It was in Adam's sleep that God took from his side that which He made into his bride, just as it was in Christ's deep sleep on the cross that God took from *His* side that which He made into His bride.

The spear went in, and the blood that flowed became the basis, the ground of our salvation, the bridal price for our redemption.

I find it interesting in Eph.5 where Paul is defining the roles of the husband and the wife, he ends by turning everything around and saying that marriage is but a picture of Christ and the church.

From that perspective – vs. 24 & 25 take on a whole new meaning.

Not only do these verses reveal God's plan for marriage between a man and woman – they shows us the *kind* of relationship He wants with us.

God doesn't want a pet – a lap dog, a finicky cat that occasionally brushes up against His leg.

He wants a bride – a lover – a companion – as it says of Adam – a helper.

Not that God NEEDS help! He needs nothing.

But He still consents to give us a place in what He's doing and His great plan for the ages.

It's not that that plan is the main thing – *we're* the main thing and the plan is just a part of making us a more fit companion for Him for eternity!

In Light of all that, look at vs. 24 & 25 again –

**24**Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

**25**And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

When we come to faith in Christ, we become new creatures.

We leave behind our old identity and become the Bride of Christ.

The relationship God wants with us is not some distant, infrequent thing but an intimate oneness that goes to the very core of our being.

He wants to remove all shame, all guilt, all regret, and replace them with acceptance, love abounding, peace, and absolute confidence.

If these things are not yours tonight – get your eyes off your failure and put them on Your Forgiver and Lover – Jesus Christ.