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Genesis 2:4 - 2:20



Genesis - Steve Gregg

In this discussion of Genesis 2:4-2:20, Steve Gregg sheds light on the different account of the creation story in the Bible. He explains that the past perfect tense in Hebrew can make it seem like events happened in a different order than they did. The depiction of the creation of man and his assigned responsibility to till the ground, as well as the complementary roles of men and women, are also explored in detail. Lastly, the discussion touches on the need to abide in Christ for eternal life and the importance of trusting in God's grace rather than trying to follow legalistic laws.

Transcript

All right. We're turning to Genesis, chapter 2. And last time we talked about the sabbath, which was in the first three verses of chapter 2. And now something changes here. The first three verses seemingly belong to the previous chapter.

Chapter 2 says, were not inspired, they were added considerably late. For hundreds of years, if not thousands, the Bible existed without chapter or verse divisions, and then someone decided to put them in, and it's a good thing they did. Imagine trying to find any given passage without chapters and verses to guide you.

Yet sometimes the divisions are not as seemingly natural as they should be, because it seems that chapter 1 should really end where we have chapter 2 verse 3, because that finishes out the week. That takes us through to the seventh day. And now chapter 2 verse 4, we start again.

I like to read the chapter. It says, This 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, before 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.

But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. 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. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden,

and there he put the man whom he had formed.

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. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.

The name of the first is Pishon. It is the one which encompasses the whole land of Hazala, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good. The Delium and the Onyx Stone are there.

The name of the second river is Gion. It is the one which encompasses the whole land of Cush. 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. Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, 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. And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.

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. So Adam gave names to all the 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. 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.

Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man he made into a woman. And he brought her to the man and said, Excuse me, 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.

Therefore man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed. So we have this chapter setting things up, setting them up for the fall in the next chapter, actually, because of the mention of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We can see that God has set a test case here for Adam and Eve. And we read how they fared in the next chapter. But let's talk about what we've discovered here.

In chapter 2, verse 4, this is the history. The word history is that word Toledoth that we

found 11 times in the book of Genesis. The King James almost always translated it the generations.

This is the generations of the heavens and the earth. In the Septuagint, this word is translated Genesis, and that's why the book of Genesis is so called. The Septuagint named this book Genesis after the repeated reference to the Toledoth, which in the Greek came out as Genesis when they translated it.

It could be translated the history of, as here, or the origins of, and there's a variety of translations that people have preferred. Most of the time in the book of Genesis, in the New King James, they translated the genealogy of. However, to call it the genealogy of the heavens and the earth doesn't seem quite right, since genealogies have to do with descents through a family of living ancestors, and the heavens and the earth did not descend in that way.

So the New King James simply says the history of, but I mentioned in our introduction to Genesis, it's not even clear whether these statements, this is the Toledoth, this is the Genesis of, so-and-so, whether these are intended to be summaries of what went on before that statement, whether they are introducing a new section, and in this case it could go either way, because in both the material before this statement and after, we have origins of the heavens and the earth. In this second chapter, we have a second account. Now, many people, when they set out to read the Bible, they get through chapter 1 and all is well, and they get through chapter 2 and all is not that well, because it seems like it contradicts the first chapter.

Both chapters do refer to some of the same events, but one thing we find is they don't refer to them in the same order. In the first chapter, we found that God created the plants on the third day. He created the animals on the fifth day and early on the sixth day, and then he made man and woman later on the sixth day.

Then here we have in verse 7 the creation of man without woman initially. Then we read of God planting trees in a garden and so forth in verse 9, and then in verse 19 we read of God forming every beast of the field. And then, last of all, we find the creation of the woman or the formation of the woman from a rib out of man.

This is a different order than we have in chapter 1, and the simple answer to that is that's exactly right. This is talking about things in a different order. It's not affirming that they happened in a different order, but it is talking about them in a different order.

Chapter 2 is not giving us a chronology. We already had that. It's not necessary for the author to give us a second chronological account.

He has already done that quite thoroughly. What he wants now to do is to tell us something more about what he considers the most important part of the creation week,

and that was the creation of man and woman, the creation of people in the image of God. Other things that happened are also mentioned.

It is not affirming that they happened at the point in time that they are mentioned. For example, if man is created in verse 7, it is not affirming that the plants were created in verse 9 and the animals in verse 19. Rather, in the Hebrew language, the verb in the past tense looks exactly the same as the verb in the past perfect tense, so that where it says in verse 9, out of the ground the Lord God made, it would as justly be translated from the same verb form in the Hebrew, out of the ground the Lord God had made every tree, and he planted a garden and put Adam in it.

Likewise, in verse 19, it could be translated out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam. It might seem like that's just a convenient way to eliminate a problem, but it is very convenient and valid. It is entirely true that the Hebrews, as well as any other people, have the concept of a past perfect.

They just don't have a separate verb form for it like we do. So the same verb form serves as a past tense or a past perfect tense. It is translated in our Bible as a simple past tense, God formed, but it could be God had formed and that's past perfect and that solves the problem.

So what we would see is the focus of the chapter is on the creation initially of man and other things that God had done earlier come up for mention at various points only in so far as the author wants to bring them into connection with man. God had made plants, but in particular he made a garden and put man in it. God had made the animals, but in particular now he brings them to Adam and gives Adam an assignment to name them.

So this I think removes the difficulty. Now there's another difficulty. It's right at the beginning of the section because it says in verse 4 or more properly verse 5, before 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 to till the ground, but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Then it talks about the creation of man. So a point is described in time where there were no plants, at least this is the first impression we get. There were no plants and there was no man to till the ground.

And so what timeframe is this supposed to be? It would almost have to be the first part of the third day because here we read of a situation where there is dry ground that is being watered by a mist, but there's not yet plants. And yet dry ground and plants were made the same day. So if this is taken at the initial impression we get from it, it sounds like it's talking about just a very short time in the beginning of the third day, but that hardly seems to make sense.

Why would it be necessary to speak about such a time which changed before the day was over? What is the significance of that? And that a mist came up to water the ground so it didn't dry out in a few hours time? What is the point of all this? I don't know the answer to that, but something has occurred to me and I don't know if it's the right answer. Sometimes there's easy solutions, sometimes there's more complex solutions. This one might be a little more complex and it might not even be real.

I might be mistaken, maybe the solution lies elsewhere and I don't know it. But it is possible, it seems to me, that it is talking about cultivated plants, humanly cultivated plants. It talks about plants of the field and herbs of the field which could refer to such crops as man at a later date would cultivate in the field.

Workers like Cain later would work the ground and grow plants in the field. In which case it's not saying there weren't any plants on the earth, but there weren't any of the kinds of plants cultivated in the field such as man would cultivate. And suggesting this would be agreeable with what it says because there was no to till the ground.

Now the Garden of Eden didn't need a man to till the ground. God planted the Garden of Eden, man just had to dress the plants. Man was just there to trim the overgrowth.

There wasn't an issue of tilling the ground for the Garden of Eden, but at a later date in human history there certainly was, especially after the fall, because we know that man then was going to earn his bread in the sweat of his face. He's going to have to till, he's going to have to plow, he's going to have to break up ground, he's going to have to do things that he didn't have to do initially. And it may be not saying here that there weren't any plants at the time described, but rather man had not yet begun to cultivate crops.

It was unnecessary to do so for a while because they had the Garden of Eden. At a later date they did cultivate crops, but in the meantime God kept the ground moist until man would get around to it, as it were. This may be a mistake on my part, but it strikes me as not unreasonable.

If indeed there is like a contradiction here between chapter 1 and chapter 2, then we would have to assume that the people who patched this together were half asleep and were not paying attention to what they were doing, or that Moses, if we allow that he wrote it all, as I believe, that he was asleep and didn't realize he just contradicted himself, or he just has given attention, two verses worth of attention, to a few hours time at the beginning of the third day, which don't matter at all in human history because humans weren't there yet. And the mist rising, what's that got to do with anything? I mean, it may be an interesting fact, but why go to the trouble of mentioning that if that was a condition that prevailed only for a few hours at the beginning of the third day? See what I'm saying? Or not? Anyway, I'm thinking it may well be that it's simply telling us that the human cultivation of soil and the growing of plants in the field, that is food plants that man would later have to grow for his survival, was not something that was

going on yet. Man wasn't out there farming yet.

He wasn't breaking up the clods and trying to scratch out a living out of the field like he would at a later date. And it had not yet rained. Now, how long this condition of no rain prevailed, we are not told.

There are many people who believe that the rainlessness and the mist in its place to water the ground prevailed until the flood. Those who say that usually are of the opinion that when God put waters above the firmament, that was really a canopy of water, a mantle of water vapor out at the edge of the atmosphere, which kind of shielded the earth from various malignant forces and radiation and so forth from space, and gave man something of a greenhouse environment to live in. This is not established by any clear statement of scripture, but it's a theory that some people feel answers to a lot of the details.

And they would say that because there were no actual clouds or precipitation until the flood, that this mist instead watered the ground. A couple of things in favor of that theory are that we do not appear to have the appearance of the rainbow until after the flood. And yet a rainbow is a naturally occurring phenomenon because of the effects of the atmosphere after the rain and the light passing through, you know, the prismic bits of water vapor and so forth, and casting the image of a rainbow.

You would think that if it was raining before the flood, there would have been rainbows before the flood. And yet we don't read of any, and it would appear from what we read in Genesis chapter eight, that rainbows appeared for the first time after the flood and therefore might have been, might mean the flood was the first occurrence of rain at all. This is only, this is only what many Christians believe.

It's not necessarily what we know to be true. It does say in Genesis, excuse me, Hebrews chapter 11, in speaking about Noah and this, this, just the way it's worded, some people might think this teaches it didn't rain before Noah's time. It says in Hebrews chapter 11, verse seven, by faith Noah being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark.

Now it says that God had warned Noah of things not yet seen. Some say that's a reference to rain. Rain had not yet been seen in Noah's day.

But that's not a strong argument because it might simply mean a worldwide flood had never yet been seen in Noah's day. So we're left without certainty about this, but this verse about the mist coming up and it had not rained on the earth and so forth, that condition prevailed for some period of time, perhaps not all the way till the flood. As a matter of fact, the way it's worded in Genesis 2, it almost sounds like it only prevailed until the time that man began cultivating the ground.

It had not rained on the earth, it says in verse five, and there was no man there to till the ground. So it's possible that after man left the garden of Eden and began to till the ground outside the garden, that rain did begin or alternately not until the flood did rain occur. One of those unanswerables, but I just want you to be aware of the different suggestions that you'll hear from different Christians.

Now the time did come when there was a man to till the ground, though that wasn't his initial assignment. God did create man. We know this happened on the sixth day, and it wasn't the first thing that happened on the sixth day because land animals were made first, which is mentioned in verse 19.

But in verse 7 it says, 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. Now man seems to be one of the first things formed, you know, that weren't just formed by God saying, let it be. I mean, God said, let the waters bring forth fishes and let the birds fly in the air, and it was so.

Everything God made previously, it would appear God just spoke it into existence. But here he sets some special care to make a special invention here, and he does it in two stages, and perhaps deliberately. The two stages are he first forms a body from the mud, from the dust, but that body is not alive.

Presumably once he had formed it, it was biologically complete, just like a body that has died, you know, a moment ago is still biologically complete, but it's not alive. There is emphasis here on the fact that man exists as a body, but not only as a body, but also as something more, because man can have existence as a body without being really a living thing. And so God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which the breath of life can be translated the spirit of life also, and it's, one could say that God added spirit here.

However, the term breath of life is used elsewhere in Scripture, sometimes to include animals as well, so we may not want to read too much spirituality into this particular phrase. But we see that man became a living being at the time God breathed life into him, and that explains, no doubt, why other living things became alive too, is that God maybe didn't breathe, and he didn't breathe into the nostrils of fish, for example, but he did impart life as a separate gift to those things that are alive. And so man comes to life because of a gift of God's breathing into his nostrils.

Now the last word in verse 7, being, a living being, the King James translates it as soul. The Hebrew word is nefesh, and the nefesh is a term that is the principal Old Testament term for the soul. But when we think of the soul, we more often have New Testament ideas in our minds, because in the New Testament, the word soul is somewhat of a different concept.

In the New Testament, we have the word *psuche* spelled with a P at the beginning, like psychology. The word psychology comes from the Greek word for soul, *psuche*, P-S. The next letter could be a Y or a U, because Greek has the same letter for both, so it could be P-S-Y or P-S-U-C-H-E, *psuche*.

That's the word soul in the Greek in the New Testament. In the Hebrew, in the Old Testament, it's *nefesh*, and *nefesh* doesn't mean the same thing. *Psuche* speaks apparently of the mental powers.

Psuche, soul, seems to speak of the emotions and the will and the intellect, and that's what most theologians understand *psuche* to refer to, is that in the New Testament, the soul is a portion of you. You are a body and a soul, and some would say, and a spirit besides. There is some dispute theologically as to whether the soul and spirit are separate entities, and that's not entirely clear in the New Testament, but many believe we are body, soul, and spirit, three parts.

But in any case, the soul in the New Testament speaks of a portion of us, rather than the whole of us. The word *nefesh*, the Hebrew word, which is the word that the King James Version translates as soul, probably should never have been translated as soul, because the concept of soul in English has come to be shaped much more by the Greek notions of the New Testament, which is a different concept. In the Greek, the word soul speaks of one aspect of human existence, the inner man, the non-material aspect of life, in contrast to our bodies.

Body and soul are distinct, and yet we are both. Our being, our humanness, is both body and soul, as the term soul is used in the New Testament, and mostly in English. But *nefesh* in the Hebrew does not seem to have that meaning.

The word *nefesh* seems to be used simply to mean a living being, as it is translated here in the New King James. The animals are also referred to as *nefesh*, living beings, living creatures, translated living creatures too, in the New King James. And so, what I'm saying is, though you find the word soul in the Old Testament, in the King James at least you do, it's not necessarily the idea that we have when we usually think of our soul as distinct from our bodies.

But man, when he became a living being, that was becoming a living soul. So that even in the New Testament, picking up the Old Testament idea sometimes with the word soul, Peter says that eight souls were saved in the ark in 1 Peter 3, meaning eight people, eight living beings, people. The word is flexible, obviously, because there were more *nefesh* saved in the ark than just the eight people, since all the animals qualify as *nefesh* too.

The term obviously has nuances that have to be determined by context. And we could have followed this story well enough without pointing that out. But you will find the word

soul used in the Old Testament, and it's rather important to know that it's not exactly the same meaning as what the New Testament uses the word soul to mean.

And in any case, when man had the breath of life breathed into his nostrils, that's when he became alive. That's the main point. What was breathed into him was life.

He had biological systems in place, non-functioning, before that, when God formed him from the dust. But he didn't have life until God gave him some of his own life. And so man comes to life, and when he comes to life, he's different than all the other things that had previous come to life, because he thinks.

In fact, he has authority, as we know from chapter 1, verses 26 and 27. God makes man and woman and gives them authority over the beasts of the field, and so forth. And we see him exercising that authority in verses 19 and 20, when he names the animals.

Naming something or someone is an act of authority. Parents name their children. God changes people's names at time, which is his way of demonstrating his authority over them.

Okay, your parents called you this, but I'm going to call you this. Jesus told Peter, you've been called Simon, I'm going to call you Peter. And to give a name to someone is an emblem, in the Hebrew mind at least, of exercising some form of authority, or doing that which only a person in authority can do.

And so in giving man the assignment to name the animals shortly after he was created, it is simply a way of saying, okay, man, I'm going to give you some responsibility, I'm going to give you some authority. I'm going to put you to work, really. God didn't put the plants and the animals to work, but he put man to work.

He gave him an assignment. He authorized him, and it emphasizes whatever he called the animals, that was their name. That is, whatever Adam decided, that stuck.

He spoke, he named them with authority, and it became official. Now, of course, we don't know what names he gave them, because we don't even know what language Adam spoke. The Tower of Babel happened after this, and all these new languages appeared.

We don't know who had the original language after all that. We don't know if the Hebrews had the language that Adam spoke. Of course, the story is given to us in Hebrew, but that doesn't mean that was the language that was spoken, just like Jesus' words are given to us in Greek, that he spoke Aramaic.

The Gospels simply translate them for us into Greek. It doesn't matter, but that's just the point. It doesn't matter, so why tell us? Why tell us that Adam named the animals when we have no way of knowing what he named them? Obviously, this is not told to us in

order to help us know what we should call the animals, but it's given to us in order for us to know that God gave man a little bit of that same authority that God had, that he was giving him dominion over the animals, and that his naming of them was an authoritative action on Adam's part.

Now, we read of the Garden of Eden in verse 8. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and it's possible to contrast that he had planted a garden eastward in Eden. That works well, too. And there he put men whom he had formed, and out of the ground the Lord God had made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

Now, there's all these good trees and all this good food, and there's two special trees singled out, apparently both of them right in the middle of the garden. It says in the midst of the garden there was that tree of life. It was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So there's two trees. They seem to be near each other in the middle of the garden. They might even be right next to each other, so that when Adam and Eve would face them, they would be confronted with a choice.

And this is exactly how God wished to set things up. He wanted Adam and Eve to make a choice. He wanted them to be tested.

He made it clear that one of these trees was off grounds, off bounds, I should say. They're not allowed to eat it, and that was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The other tree, the tree of life, was not forbidden to them.

They could eat of that. In fact, it is my belief that they had to eat of the tree of life. We sometimes assume that man as a species is innately immortal.

Perhaps we see that as part of the image of God in man. God is immortal, and therefore man, made in God's image, is also immortal. And therefore we assume that after man dies, he must continue to exist forever and ever and ever and ever, somewhere or another.

Thus we have heaven and hell, and that when a person dies, they either live forever in hell or forever in heaven. This is at least the assumption we bring. But the Bible does not say that man was made immortal.

In fact, the Bible says that man was not made immortal. Man was made potentially immortal. If he would eat of the tree of life, the Bible says, he would live forever.

Once man sinned, God cut man off from access to the tree of life so that he would not eat of it and live forever. Living forever was contingent on eating of that tree. It was not basic to human nature to live forever.

Man could live forever or not. If he would eat of the tree of the knowledge of evil, God told him, you'll die. You won't live forever.

But if they eat of the tree of life, they will live forever. Now this is kind of a different thought than most of us have had, but it's certainly a biblical one. And if you look over at 1 Timothy chapter 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 14 through 16, Paul told Timothy that he should keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest in his own time.

He who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality. Who alone has immortality. The word alone means only.

Essentially, Paul seems to think that only Jesus among humans, only Jesus has immortality. Now, if he didn't think that, he wouldn't have to use the word alone. He could just say, who is immortal? But he says, no, he alone is immortal.

He alone possesses immortality. And further, when Paul writes to the Romans in Romans chapter 2, he describes two classes of people and their fates. And in Romans chapter 2, it says in verse 6, that God will render to each one according to his deeds.

He says in verse 7, Romans 2, 7, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality. There are people who by continuous and good deeds seek for immortality. Apparently they don't possess it innately.

It has to be something sought for. God alone possesses immortality. Christ alone possesses immortality.

But people can seek for it. But how can they find it? In Christ. Christ alone has it.

We have it in him. If we come into Christ, then we share in his immortality. So that John says in 1 John chapter 5, that this is the promise that he's given us.

Eternal life. And this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life.

He means eternal life. He that has not the Son of God does not have eternal life. In my opinion, and you may take it or leave it, in my opinion the tree of life in the Garden of Eden represents Christ himself.

And that man is not innately capable of living forever. In order to live forever, Adam and Eve would have to eat of the tree of life. Now I'm going to suggest they would have to eat of the tree of life continuously, not just once.

That's not stated clearly in Genesis, but it seems to be implied elsewhere. For example, in Revelation chapter 22, where we see the tree of life again. In the New Jerusalem.

In Revelation chapter 22, describing the New Jerusalem, it says in verses 1 and 2, He

showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street and on either side of the river was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree for healing of the nations.

Now, there's imagery here, perhaps symbolic, but the thing that's important is that we have the concept of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem as we had it in the unfallen world in Genesis. But we are told something in Revelation 22, that we're not told about the tree of life in Genesis 1, and that is it brings forth its fruit every month. Well, why would it do that? If it was such that if someone just had to eat of the tree of life and then they automatically live forever and ever, they'd never have to eat it again.

Why would it have to keep producing fruit every month? The impression is that this tree must be eaten of on a regular basis, but no worries, it produces its fruit regularly. And therefore, it would sound like eternal life, even in the New Jerusalem, is sustained by this continual eating, regular eating of the tree of life. This means that a person Adam and Eve might have eaten of the tree of life before they fell, but they wouldn't live forever unless they could keep eating of it.

And God debarred them from that tree by setting a cherub there at a later date, so they would not live forever anymore. They couldn't keep eating of that tree. Now, maybe I'm reading more into it than belongs, but I don't see that all this data could really be sensible if this isn't the true picture.

That God made man not intrinsically immortal, but potentially immortal. He could live forever. Animals could not.

I don't believe that God made animals potentially immortal. And that's why I personally think that even if there had been no fall, animals probably would have died. But man would not, because man would have continual access to the tree of life, which, by eating of it, would continually sustain him for the rest of all eternity.

And so we find it, apparently, in the book of Revelation also. Now, if this is a picture of Christ, as I believe it is, this life we have comes conditionally to us in Christ. We're not born immortal.

We become immortal when we come to Christ. Eternal life is in Him. Those who have Him have eternal life.

Those who are not in Him don't have eternal life. But notice also, if it is true that Adam and Eve had to continually eat of the tree of life, then this would suggest we have to continually abide in Christ. We have to continually be nourished by Christ in order to live forever.

It's not just one bite and you're in, and then you just cruise. It's rather you need to

maintain your relationship with Christ. You need to maintain your connection to Christ.

As Jesus put it, I'm the vine and you're the branches. Every branch that abides in me brings forth fruit. But He says, if a branch does not abide in me, does not remain in me, it is cast forth.

He said, actually, if any man does not abide in me, he is cast forth like a branch, and they're withered, and they're gathered and burned, said John 15.6. And so this abiding in Christ, abiding in the continually eating of the tree of life, is what sustains eternal life in the human being. And apparently it was true of Adam also, unless I'm reading too much into it. But I don't think I'm going very far beyond what's specifically stated in these passages.

In any case, we find that the tree of life was there, and Adam and Eve had to eat that. But near it, perhaps within sight of it, was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which they were forbidden to eat, so that they were going to be tempted. I mean, it's not like they could just stay out of the middle of the garden and avoid the temptation.

If they had to eat of the tree of life, and if it was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the midst of the garden too, then they had to come to it within proximity of temptation, perhaps on a regular basis. And you might say, well, that's a bad plan. You know, God should have figured out that he should have put the tree that he didn't want them to eat on the other side of the garden, where they could just avoid it all together.

Yeah, if that's what God wished, that's no doubt what he would have done. What seems obvious is that God intended for them to be tested. The word tempt in the Hebrew and in the Greek is the same word for test.

And Adam and Eve were tested or tempted, and God wanted them to be tested. He wanted, God wanted Jesus to be tested. We find in the Gospels, the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted or tested by the devil.

Testing is part of what God had in mind for people. And that's why we are tempted. When I was young, I was raised in a Christian home.

My parents were devout, and it was a good home. I really enjoyed it. And we once had the pastor over to our home.

And my dad, basically, it was just a normal pastoral visit. There was no crisis in our home. The pastor just made the rounds and visited different people in the church.

I remember one evening, the pastor was in our home, and my dad took the occasion to ask questions of the pastor about things that always had perplexed him. I was young at the time, so I couldn't answer them for my dad at the time. He comes to me now about

those things.

But back then he had to go to the pastor. And I remember the question, but I don't remember the answer the pastor gave. But my dad gave a question that seemed like a really good question to me, and I didn't know the answer either.

And my dad said to the pastor, you know, I understand why God would want people to make a free choice, and therefore, before they become Christians, why God would allow the devil to tempt them and God to call them so that they're kind of in a position to make a choice. But he says, what I don't understand is why once we decide to be Christians, why doesn't God just say, okay, that person's mine now. You leave them alone.

Why does the devil keep being able to test us? And I believe that that, I mean, I believe now, I didn't know at the time, it sounded like a good question to me. I believe at the time, that's exactly what God wants is for us to be tested and to pass continuous tests. The test even can get harder as time goes by.

The reason is because when God made man, he made somebody that he wished to share dominion with. He wanted man to rule with him. Still does.

He still wants us to rule with him. But you don't you don't hand over the keys to the to the car to a kid who hasn't had any, hasn't taken a driver's test. You don't give a medical degree to a surgeon who's never been through medical school and passed the exams.

You don't give responsibility to somebody who you don't know if they can handle it or not. You don't make somebody rule the universe. If you don't know what kind of person they are yet, you don't know if they're if it'll be disastrous.

And so God has put humans on this planet as a school to test us, to teach us and test us. And when we finish this lifetime, then we graduate into our career of ruling with Christ over the universe. But only those who pass the test, just like only those who pass the medical exams are going to be surgeons, hopefully.

If people fail those exams, we don't want them to be surgeons. And those who fail these tests will not reign with Christ. The Bible says, if we endure, we will reign with him.

It is our enduring in faithfulness to God, loyalty, unbroken and unbreakable loyalty to God that qualifies us to reign with Christ. God does not want to have people you know, given charge over the universe, who aren't sure that he's not sure they're gonna be loyal to him. So he gives us a lifetime of testing to see if we'll be loyal to him or if we'll go some other way.

Now Adam and Eve, I don't think God intended for them to die and then inherit things. He gave it to them right off. But they had to remain loyal all along.

They had to be tested, their loyalty had to be tested. And so God wanted them to face these tests. I mean, think about it.

Did you think that God was not aware there was a devil in the garden when he put Adam there? You know, seems like poor planning, doesn't it? I mean, God puts Adam and Eve in the garden. He could have put them anywhere on the earth, but he puts them right in the garden where this snake is, who's going to talk to him about, you know, couldn't God put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil over, you know, in Australia and put Adam and Eve in America, or vice versa, so that they'd never run into each other and the snake is over there with the tree and man's over here, blissfully ignorant of the whole thing. That's not what God had in mind.

It's obvious. God set this up. Now, some people say God set man up to fail.

No, God did not set man up to fail. Failing was one option. Passing the test was another.

You might as well say that the examiner at the university, when he gives you an exam, he sets you up to fail. Only if you're actually qualified for the thing you're training for. If you're qualified, you pass the test.

If you disqualify yourself, then, yeah, you fail. To give someone a test doesn't mean you're setting them up for failure. It means you're testing to see if they will pass or fail.

And Adam and Eve could have passed, or could have failed. They failed, as it turned out. We're not there yet.

But the point is, God wanted them to be tested. Did God want them to sin? No, He didn't want them to sin. He wanted them to be victorious over the test.

He wanted them to pass and not sin. But you can't pass the test if the test is never issued. You can't qualify if you don't ever go through the steps of qualifying.

And so, here's what God did. He put a test there. Adam and Eve, in my opinion, had to go regularly to the Tree of Life.

Now, I don't know if they lived long enough in the Garden to ever actually go to the Tree of Life. They may have fallen the second day of their life, and that was a moot point. Or, we don't know, maybe they fell months later.

Maybe they had eaten of the Tree of Life some, but they couldn't keep doing it after they fell. The point is, every time they would come to the Tree of Life, it seems to me they would also possibly encounter this other temptation of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, if the Tree of Life represents Christ, what does the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represent? Now, I believe there's a real tree, by the way.

I'm not taking this all symbolically. I believe we're talking about a real story with real

trees and real snake and real people and all that. But, if it is true that the Tree of Life was so constructed to stand in the place in Adam and Eve's life that Christ stands in the place of every man today, what corresponds to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Well, if the Bible gives any clues about that, it would appear that it's perhaps law or legalism.

Paul said, by the law is the knowledge of sin. And, it's almost as if God has given people two options. You can receive life by grace from me, simply by eating of the Tree of Life, which I give you, or you can try to make it on your own.

You can try to set standards, laws, and live up to those laws and try to be all you can be on your own. And, that's what legalism is. That's what law is.

Law is, you know, if you are trying to be righteous by keeping laws, it means that you're being righteous not by the grace of God. You're being righteous by what you can do. And, I believe that Adam and Eve were given this temptation.

They could either just continue to live on the grace and the bounty of God. Of course, that would mean under His authority. That would mean like children under a father, doing each day what the father wishes them to do, but not setting up a legal system and saying, we don't need instructions every day.

We'll just set up a system, we'll always live by these rules. You see, then we'll have our own independent means of being righteous. I think that's really the temptation people have when they come to religion, when they come to God.

They can either just receive the grace of God and have eternal life, or they can set up some kind of religious legal system by which they try to cut the mustard and try to measure up to whatever it is the standards they think they should measure up to. And, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil may very well represent the option of law as opposed to the option of grace, which is in Christ. The more I think about this question, the more I think that that's true, as far as what these things represent to us.

But, going back to the original story, we have this set up. We've got the two trees in the garden. We've got Adam in the garden.

We have not yet been told, but we will soon find there's also a serpent in the garden. And, he's going to cause trouble. But, we read about these rivers, and perhaps the reason the rivers are mentioned in verses 10 through 14 is because they actually set a geographical boundary for the Garden of Eden.

Which, by the way, the mention of these rivers would be absolutely superfluous, unless the writer is trying to give us the impression that this is a real place that really existed. This is not mythology. We're not just talking here about, you know, parables and myths.

We're talking about a place that could be located geographically by actual markers. Now, the four rivers that are named are a bit troublesome because we don't know where two of them are. Two of them we do.

Of course, the Euphrates is the most recognizable name there in verse 14. The fourth river mentioned. In verse 14, you also have the Hitticale, which is known as the Tigris today.

By the way, that river is also mentioned in Daniel 10 for the Hitticale River. That's the Tigris River. Now, today we can go to the Middle East and see the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers.

And, therefore, since these two rivers are converged at the Garden of Eden, we'd have to say that the Garden of Eden was somewhere in what's called the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. The other two rivers named are essentially unknown to us. Now, that's strange for rivers to kind of disappear.

But no doubt the reason that these lesser rivers, probably not as large as the Tigris and Euphrates, have passed away probably is because of the flood, which happened after the time of Adam, in the time of Noah. The flood did, of course, change a lot of things about the topography of the earth. Apparently the Tigris and the Euphrates Valleys continued to exist even after the flood.

But these other two rivers, the Pishon and the Gion, are simply unknown to us today. They've apparently smoothed over and there's no river beds there anymore where they used to be. The flood would then be, probably, the most reasonable suggestion, is what wiped out those two rivers and we don't have them anymore on the planet Earth.

But think about that. If it is true that the flood wiped out the Pishon and the Gion Rivers, then their mention here means that Moses had some pre-flood sources. Because Moses, writing this, lived after the flood.

He wouldn't know about the Pishon or the Gion Rivers either. After the flood they were gone, I'm assuming. And that would mean that in writing this, Moses, who wouldn't have any personal knowledge of these two rivers either, because he lived after the flood also, Moses must have been working from earlier sources that were written before the flood.

This portion of Genesis, apparently, is preserved, probably in writing, if not by oral tradition, from people who lived before the flood, back when those rivers existed. Back when the mention of them conveyed some information. To tell people before the flood these four rivers, where Eden is, would convey information about their location.

After the flood, with those two rivers missing, who would mention them? Why mention them? No one would even know what they are or where they were. So what I'm saying is this seems to testify to a very early source for this particular chapter. Very possibly,

Adam is the source of it.

Or at least somebody before the flood. Now, also the mention of the gold that's in the land of Havilah. That would be something that, you know, I mean, that kind of detail, it doesn't play any role in the story.

It's the kind of detail that you give just because it's a fact. If you make up parables and myths and things, you don't have to mention there was gold in that land. That river went off and went around the land of Havilah, you know, where all that gold is.

Well, why mention that if that's not factual? It wouldn't play any role in a symbolic story or something that was not true. It's just one of those facts you might mention because it is a fact. Verse 15 says, Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, to tend and to keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. Now, the statement, the Lord God commanded the man, establishes the proper relationship immediately after the creation of man. He takes command.

God commands, man obeys. That's the role, it's a hierarchical relationship. Man is made in God's image but not at God's rank or level.

God is in the role of commanding his creatures. And so he commands man what to do. And this is the first and only law or restriction we would say, because I don't know that we call it a law, it's just a restriction.

A father telling his son, don't touch that. Don't do that. You know, don't eat that.

I mean, when parents tell their children not to do a certain thing, that's not necessarily a law, it's just obedience to what the parent wants, but there are no laws given. It would appear that Adam and Eve were permitted to do just about anything they wanted in the whole world except eat of that tree. Nothing else would actually be a sin for them to do.

And so they were given a great deal of liberty. Now, Eve was not yet created at this point, and so it is Adam who was given the instructions. We must assume that Eve received those instructions from Adam later on, because God gave the instructions before Eve was there to hear them.

And he's told that you will die. Now, I'm not sure what the word die would mean to Adam, who had never seen death. When we hear the word die, we can think of people who've died.

They're not with us anymore, you know, wherever they've gone. They're under the

ground, they've been eaten by worms. Adam didn't have any of that frame of reference.

But certainly his entire language was just implanted in his head, so the word death must have had a meaning just like all the other words in his language did. He really had no frame of reference for any of the words in his vocabulary. He just had innate knowledge of what these words meant, apparently.

But the threat is that he would die if he eats of that tree. And the Lord God said, It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper comparable to him.

Now, we then read in verses 19 through 20 of man's naming the animals. And one could get the impression that it's saying that God is saying, OK, I want to make a partner for this man, so I'll try all these animals out and see if they work. But God wouldn't be... First of all, God would know better.

He would know these animals are not the same species as man and would not be a help comparable. And therefore, it's entirely possible that verses 19 and 20 are parenthetical. That verse 21 follows chronologically immediately after verse 18.

That is that God said, I'm going to make a helper. And then in verse 21, So the Lord caused man to sleep and made a woman to be a helper. In the meantime, we are told, perhaps parenthetically, that at an earlier point, God had made the animals, brought them to Adam.

Adam had named them. But, of course, there wasn't anything comparable to Adam there. And so God determined that he would make something comparable for man and made him go to sleep.

If you put the entirety of verses 19 and 20 in parentheses, which is entirely possible, there are no punctuation marks in the Hebrew, so you can add the parentheses where they belong. And that's a bit of a subjective call. But it would be possible to say that God said, I'm going to make a helper comparable to man.

And he didn't then go out and bring animals and say, any of these do, Adam? But rather that he's saying, God had made animals previous to this. God had brought them to Adam. He had named them.

But not with the mind of him finding a mate. It's just that this had already happened before. And, of course, once Adam had surveyed the entire living world, it became evident there wasn't any corresponding person to him.

And so God said, well, it's not good that this condition prevail. Some people have observed that in verse 18 we have the first time God says, it's not good. Every time he created something in the book of Genesis chapter 1, he said, it is good.

It is good. He saw it, that was good. Now for the first time he says, something isn't good.

Now, it's not that it was evil. It's just that it wasn't adequate. It wasn't complete until he made a partner for man.

It was not good for man to be alone. Now, why wasn't it good for man to be alone? Many people say, now, of course, we're going to read here about the creation of the first marriage. Many people say that one of the reasons God created marriage, or maybe the main reason, is for companionship.

Because it was not good for man to be lonely. Now, to say it's not good for man to be lonely isn't the same thing as saying it's not good for man to be alone. A person can be alone and not lonely.

And in my opinion, Adam was not lonely. I don't think he had time to be lonely. Adam and Eve were both created the same day.

In the meantime, between the time God made man and woman, man and God were communicating. Man was busy about the business of naming animals. That must have taken a while.

I don't know that man ever had a chance to get lonely on that day. I know sometimes I'm lonely, but when I'm keeping busy with my work or my business, I'm not thinking about it. I don't feel lonely.

And probably you know the same phenomenon. And so, being lonely isn't even always bad. Being lonely can be a really positive thing, if you're in relationship with God.

Being alone with God is a great thing. But there was something about God's purpose for man that made it not good for him to be alone. You know, if you have to carry a large object that takes two to carry, and you're alone, that's not good.

It's not good to be alone when there's a project that takes two people to do it. It has nothing to do with being lonely. It has nothing to do with craving companionship.

It has to do with being able to do what you've got to do, and needing more than one person to do it. I believe that it's in that sense that it was not good for man to be alone. Because what was he supposed to do? Well, you can look at Genesis chapter 1 and see that in verse 28, God, when he made man and woman, gave them their assignment, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

Now that a man can't do alone. He can't be fruitful and multiply. If man was only needing companion, there'd be no need for a woman to be made.

He could make a dog. A dog could be a companion. Some people find a dog a better companion than a woman or a man.

Or for that matter, another man would be a great companion. You know, men understand men. They don't understand women.

If God just wanted man to have a companion, probably he'd be happier with another man. If it's just someone to talk to. And women would be more happy with another woman.

God made a man and a woman to solve the problem, which means it wasn't just about having somebody to talk to. It wasn't just about not being lonely. It was about something that had to be done.

Namely what? To be fruitful and multiply. That's what it was not good for man to be alone when God had this in mind for man to do. He needed to have someone comparable to him.

Not identical to him. Women and men are obviously in most points fairly identical. We both have two eyes on the front of our heads.

Two nostrils in our noses. Mouths positioned roughly in the same place. And our gross anatomy has pretty much the same features.

But obviously there are some things different between men and women. Apart from the facial hair, the things that are different about a man and woman have to do with one thing. And that's the production and nourishing of children.

You know? Men and women have almost all the same body parts with a few exceptions. The exceptions are related to reproduction. God, if he wanted man just to have company, could have made a direct clone of man.

But that would be impossible to reproduce. God made a creature that is of the same species, same DNA as man, but comparable, not identical. Now this is important.

Because even without the Bible, most cultures have known men and women are different from each other. Now many cultures have not known what the Bible tells us, and that is that men and women are equal to each other. The Bible tells us men and women are equal.

That is not something all cultures have known. Because women have often been physically weaker than men, and therefore more easily oppressed by men. And because of the fall and the wickedness of human beings, men usually oppress anyone they can.

That has usually included their children and their wives. Because their children and their wives are weaker and smaller than they are. That's an effect of sin.

And the Bible tells us what other cultures don't know, and that God considers men and women to be equal in value, equal in importance. But with or without the Bible, we could

have deduced he didn't make them identical. Or we could say interchangeable.

This is something which anyone could see. A man cannot play the role of a woman, and a woman cannot play the role of a man in reproduction, which is the main task that God gave them. The reason God said it wasn't good for man to be alone is because he needed someone who, along with him as a partner, could help him be fruitful and fill the earth and subdue it.

That was the assignment. Neither a man nor a woman can do that alone. Nor can two men.

Nor can two women. Only a man and a woman, together in partnership, can do that. They are both equally essential.

They're both equally valuable. They're both equally in God's image. But they're not interchangeable parts.

Lots of machines that we're familiar with have essential parts that are not interchangeable. Some of them may be of exactly the same value. I don't know, but it might be that if you need a new transmission for your car, and you need a new engine for your car, they might cost you about the same.

I don't know. I think that's very possible. You might end up paying a little more for the engine.

But suppose the model of car you had, the transmission cost just as much as the engine, and you had to replace both. Well, you'd have to say that the transmission and the engine are both of equal value, both monetarily, and also in terms of essentialness. You can't run the car without the transmission.

You can't run it without the engine. But they're not interchangeable parts. You can't put the transmission under the hood and hope for it to do the job of the engine.

And you can't put the engine in the drivetrain to do the job of the transmission. They may be of equal value, but they're certainly not doing the same work. They're not interchangeable parts.

And this is where our society, which has gotten away from letting the Bible inform us about God's purpose, has gotten, I think, irrational. You see, people have come to the point where they're not thinking straight. They think if they're not interchangeable, they're not equal.

And therefore, if we don't have women doing everything men do, then women are being kept at a different level of importance than men. And that women, and they should all, there should be no job descriptions that differentiate between men and women, because

they're equal. Well, yes, they are equal.

That's something the Bible tells us. But everyone knows, including the Bible, that there are different things that men are designed for and different things women are designed for. We would not wish, I don't think, to have the women be the hunters and the gatherers for the family and doing the back-breaking work that men are designed to do.

Now, women do their own back-breaking kind of work. But women tend to be more nurturing and therefore more suited for the task that they have historically and biblically done, and that is to rear their children and to bring them up in a secure and nourishing and nurturing environment. Now, I'm not saying that there aren't some women who are as strong as some men or some men who are as nurturing as some women.

Individually, you will find that there are women who make better presidents than some men would. And there are men who probably make better mothers than some women would. But some is not what we're talking about.

We're talking about what God designed the categories for. God assigned the man and the woman to each do part of what... They both are components to one machine. The two become one flesh.

They are two fleshes and they become one flesh to work together as, not interchangeable, but complementary parts. And so the Bible teaches that God made a woman for man to be complementary to him. It says comparable to him here.

But the point is, God made man and woman. He didn't make man and man or woman and woman. And God could have, but obviously in the purposes of God, He made women and men different in some ways and very much the same in other ways.

So in the later revelations of Scripture, God tells what the differences are for. And however, we live in a culture that rejects that, as you probably know. And they think that a man can be as good a mom as the mom can be.

Or that the woman can be as good a breadwinner as the man can be. Well, maybe she can, but does it work out in the long term? If they're not in the role that God assigned to them primarily, does that bring about over time an erosion, not only of the soul of the individuals involved, because they're not in the role that they're supposed to be in, but also in the family structure over time? Some would say no, but I think yes. I think that God had the right idea when he made things.

And we will find that Paul, whose statements about men and women are perhaps the most controversial in the Bible in today's society, because Paul on some points simply was not in sync with the values of our present modern secular society, Paul actually used the story of creation, the very story we're reading in Genesis chapter, he used that as the basis from which to expound on husbands and wives and their specific activities as a

unit, as a family unit. And I'm going to take the time, because it would be irresponsible for me to read this story without showing how the New Testament amplifies on it, but we need to take a break, just because we're running that late. So we're going to take a break, and we'll come back and finish up chapter 2, and maybe if we have time get into chapter 3 also at that point.