

Lesson 8 Genesis 2:7-14

Genesis for Families

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 soul. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. 10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; 12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

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 soul. We see from the Bible that from the moment of conception man had a special place and a special purpose in the eternal plan of God. I use one plan because God is unity in perfection and all things will be ordered by God into the single purpose of bringing all glory to God. God created all things for this single purpose, His own glory.

We might notice in passing here that the word used for dust in the English translation is the ancient Hebrew word meaning clay as in a potter's clay. That which man will later use to form lifeless objects of use and beauty God uses to create the chief among all of creation. It is important to note that the word translated life in this passage is in the plural. Thus a literal rendering would be "and breathed into his nostrils the breath lives; and man became a living soul. This points to the dual nature of man and that man is both a living creature as all other living things created by God, but also that man has an immortal soul wherein we find the image of God and the ability to think and reason, to have dominion.

Some teach that man is tri-fold or has three parts in body, soul, and spirit. This isn't correct in that the Bible teaches man has a body and soul. The Bible uses the word spirit and soul as synonyms and often interchanges their use in revealing God to us. Only one passage indicates spirit and soul perhaps exist as different things and that is in describing God's word and its ability to divide even spirit and soul. The intent is to show that which is impossible for man, is possible by God's divine word.

This puts to rest theories of the spirit leaving the body and returning almost at will by some people and often by those who are in critical circumstances and find themselves facing death. The body of man is dead when the spirit departs and only the final resurrection by Christ

at the last day will reunite spirit and body. We find then that the Bible teaches a dual nature to man, body and soul.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Here we see the special care God gave for man and God himself creating the perfect environment for man to assume his God given duty and take dominion over all of God's creation. We also see God do something for man in his creation that will not exist for any person after these first two human beings are created. God sets before man in the garden the tree of life whereby man could have eaten and lived forever. I see this tree as an emblem of Christ present in the garden which as we will see very shortly man turns away from in favor of that which is of the world and more visible to man as Adam will disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit while ignoring the permitted fruit of Christ. The two trees then represent man in the world even in the perfection of creation chose sin over obedience to God. We will deal with this more fully later in the proper place in the text of the Bible. The point here is man had the ability to choose Christ but did not. After the garden and the entrance of sin, man does not have this free choice, but by nature is turned from God with no way to enter everlasting life by his own choice.

The Bible at this point gives a description of the Garden of Eden. Man has ever sought this garden but has not been able to find it. With our present ability to see the whole surface of the earth at once from space some have concluded such a place never really existed. The Bible says it was a real literal place and this story of creation is fact, not a mythical story. It is history revealed by God! Why does no place like this described in the Bible exist today? The world has changed its geography many times through the years and there is no reason to deny that these rivers existed and flowed just where the Bible says they did then. Earthquakes and volcanoes long ago changed the face of the earth. Though out of sequence here, we can see this in the removal of man from the garden and God setting a guard over the garden lest man should return. I think we can see the flaming swords guarding the entrance to Eden as some of the intense and violent geophysical events that were present in the creation.

Application:

No matter the earthly circumstances around you, take heart for you are wondrously made by the hand of God for His purpose and in God's sight are very important, even loved by God. Nothing in earth or heaven can separate us from the love of God or stay the hand of God in the ordering of history. Satan would have you wandering helplessly around waiting a blind fate. God has a plan and orders the very footsteps of His creation of which you are chief. All of the activity of man is mere foolishness compared to the perfect plan of God and you are part of that plan which has only one purpose, to glorify God.

God's word is sure and is sharp, even to the rending apart of the soul and spirit. Man's wisdom says we need self-esteem and personal value or we have no life. God's word says don't think too much of yourself, but to love all of God's created even those we consider enemies. Our true value is with God not what man thinks is good and of value.

Questions:

- Is the creation of man historical or merely symbolic?
- Was the Garden of Eden a real place on earth?
- If Eden really existed why can't modern science find a place like this on earth today?
- Who or what did the tree of life in the garden represent?
- How many parts is man composed of? Name them.