

AN EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 2



The Glorious Garden of Eden

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Have you ever wondered why God planted the Garden of Eden in a world that was at that time “very good” (Genesis 1:31)? In other words, why did God bother to set up a special place on earth when the whole creation was absolutely perfect to begin with?

Why did God put the Tree of Life in that Garden? This is not a silly question because Adam and Eve had no need to eat of that tree prior to their fall; they had been created originally to live forever. And when they did eat of it -- that is, after they had rebelled against God -- they could no longer get to the Tree of Life because God banished them from the Garden.

And why do you suppose God made Adam and the beast of the field and the fowl of the air from the dust of the ground, but then He made Eve from Adam’s rib? What is so different about Eve?

These are just a few of the thought-provoking questions that this study of Genesis 2 will answer. You see, Jesus, who is the Word Himself, speaks unto the multitude in parables and without a parable spake He not to them (Matthew 13:34, Mark 4:34). Hidden in the historical parable are spiritual truths that relate to various aspects of the Gospel.

This exposition has by no means uncovered all the spiritual truths that God has hidden in Genesis 2, but as we study all the verses by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and as the Holy Spirit guides and teaches us, I believe that we will begin to see the glorious, eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ pictured in the historical Garden of Eden.

Verses 1-2: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

After having recorded the first six days of creation in Genesis 1, God speaks of the seventh day here in the opening verses of Genesis 2. This is noteworthy because, in a sense, the statements made in these verses are part of the creation story. Yet, God has purposely separated the seventh day from the first six days.

Remember that while chapter divisions in the New Testament were put in by the Bible translators (the original Greek manuscript has no such separa-

tions), the Hebrew manuscript from which the Old Testament is translated does come with chapter divisions. In other words, the chapter divisions therein were made by God, not by man.

Why, then, has God recorded the seventh day in this chapter? The answer can be found in the next verse.

Verse 3: And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The seventh day of the creation week is exceptionally special in that God Himself rested from all His work on this day. He blessed it and sanctified it.

The fact that God rested from all his work this day is all the more special when we realize that it is directly related to the spiritual rest that believers have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God explains the Sabbath rest at length in Hebrews 4. We read in Hebrews 4:9-11:

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Thus, the Old Testament seventh-day sabbath pointed to the completed salvation work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we become saved, we rest in Christ. We rest from trying to work our way into being right with God; we simply put all of our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, believing by faith that He has done all the work for us. We do not have to work for salvation.

By blessing the seventh day, God, in effect, blessed those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. By sanctifying the day of rest, He in effect, sanctifies or sets apart those who have found rest in Christ for the service of God.

From the first three verses, we have thus gotten the first hint that, spiritually, Genesis Chapter 2 has much to say about God's salvation plan -- the Gospel of grace.

Verse 4: These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

In this verse, God seems to be saying that He created the heavens and the earth in the day that He created the earth and the heavens. When reading that, we normally just gloss over that seeming redundancy. But I learned a long time ago that God does not put anything accidentally in the Bible. We should, therefore, pay close attention to every word that He uses, especially in sentences that seem awkward at first glance.

For example, the word "generations" here is plural; it is translated from a

Hebrew word that means “beginnings” or “births.” Thus, we know at once that this verse has to do with more than the creation of the universe.

Searching through the Scriptures, it is found that when God talks about the creation, He almost always uses the phrase “the heaven(s) and the earth.” Seldom does He say “the earth and the heavens,” as He does in the latter part of this verse.

The only other place where God reverses the order is in Revelation 20:11 where we read, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” Here, God is speaking about the end of the present universe which, of course, is Judgment Day.

Judgment Day is also the day when Christ returns to gather His elect; and the end of this universe is the beginning of the new creation. We read in II Peter 3:10-13:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The same truth is seen in Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

Speaking of the end of time, Jesus says in Matthew 25:34, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Even as Christ the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, the new kingdom that the elect shall inherit was prepared from the foundation of the world.

Thus, the word “generations” or “beginnings” in this verse refers not only to the present physical universe, but to the new heavens and the new earth as well. God’s plan of salvation was developed before the foundation of the world.

Confirmation. This is further confirmed by the fact that in this verse, God introduces a name for God that was not used at all in the first chapter. In Genesis 1, the word “God” in the statement, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” is translated from the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is a

plural noun that means Almighty God.

In Genesis 2:4, God uses the name Jehovah. (In the King James Bible, it is translated LORD, with all four letters capitalized.) In Isaiah 43:11, God declares, “I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah]; and beside me there is no saviour.” Jehovah is thus a name that connotes the idea that God is the Savior.

That is why when God first commissioned Moses to free the Israelites from their enslavement in Egypt, He said in Exodus 6:3, “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.”

With all this in mind, we can paraphrase verse 4 this way: “These are the beginnings of the present and the eternal heavens and earth, in the day that Jehovah God prepared the new earth and heavens for the elect.”

Thus, we can see that Genesis 2 does indeed talk about God’s salvation plan.

Verse 5: And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

In Genesis 1, God tells us that He created vegetation on the third day and man on the sixth day. This verse seems to say that vegetation could not be there until man was created. Is there a contradiction here?

Not at all. In Genesis 1, God gives us the chronological order of creation. There is no confusion there whatsoever. In this verse, He sets forth a fundamental principle: vegetation cannot grow and become fruitful until there is rain to water it and man to till the ground.

This fundamental principle applies spiritually to God’s kingdom as well. In the Bible, vegetation is a picture of that which comes forth when the Gospel is sent out into the world. In the parable of the sower, for example, Jesus talks about the fruitful growth of those who have truly become saved.

God paints a beautiful picture of salvation for us in Isaiah 35:1, “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.”

In other words, to build the eternal church of God, living water must first be poured out and the foundation must first be laid by a man. In the next two verses, we will see how God Himself took care of these two prerequisites.

Verse 6: But (And) there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

In the King James Bible, the Hebrew word that is translated “But” at the beginning of this verse could just as well be translated “And,” and the latter translation makes the verse easier to follow.

God tells us how it rains in Job 36:27, “For he maketh small the drops of

water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.” The word “vapour” in Job is the identical Hebrew word that is translated “mist” in Genesis 2:6. Thus, God is saying in this verse that for vegetation to grow, He provided rain on the earth.

Spiritually, God provides the living water of the kingdom of Christ. It was poured out at Pentecost. In explaining that unique happening, God quotes from the Book of Joel and says in Acts 2:17, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.”

Jesus says in John 7:38, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” The Apostle John explains in the next verse, John 7:39, “(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

Verse 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.

Historically speaking, God is providing us here with a formal account of the creation of Adam, the progenitor of the whole human race.

Spiritually, the Lord Jesus Christ is the man God has in view in the first instance. To till and prepare the ground for the kingdom of Christ, He had to die for our sins.

Lest you think that I am spiritualizing too much, note what God says in Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” The last phrase of this verse very clearly declares that Adam was a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ who was to come.

What was Jesus formed of? He was born of the virgin Mary, of course, upon whom the Holy Spirit came. Mary is of this earth, the dust of the ground. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, and He likened the Holy Spirit to the wind or the air we breathe.

Thus, the Holy Spirit, eternal God Himself, gave Jesus the breath of life.

Verse 8: And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

The immediate question that arises is the question raised at the outset of this study: If the creation was perfect, why would God make a special garden for Adam? Surely the whole creation could not have been more beautiful. Yet, historically, there was indeed a special area which God called the Garden of Eden.

This makes sense once we realize that hidden in Genesis 2 is God’s glori-

ous salvation plan. God planted the Garden of Eden to symbolize the spiritual kingdom of God that would later exist on this earth.

In the beginning, the earth was perfect; but after man rebelled against God, the whole earth came under the curse of sin. God foreknew that. So, His salvation plan provides that within the sinful world, there will exist a kingdom or a people who will again have a right relationship with God.

Notice the Bible says the Garden of Eden was planted “eastward.” Eastward of what? It does not say eastward of anything. It does not have to because in the Bible, God frequently uses the word “east” in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, He “is a sun and shield” (Psalm 84:11), and “unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2). No matter where you are, the sun rises in the east.

Ezekiel says that the Prince will come through the eastern gate (Ezekiel 43:1-4); and the wise men saw His star in the east (Matthew 2:2). So, the Garden of Eden, which typifies the kingdom of God, was planted eastward.

Verse 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.

This verse mentions three kinds of tree, which will be briefly discussed.

The Trees for Food. These trees are beautiful and bear fruit for food. Spiritually, they represent believers. In the Bible, God frequently pictures the righteous as fruitful trees. Of course, we are righteous only because we have been given the robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Psalm 1:3, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” (See also Psalm 92:12, 14.)

Believers are to sustain others by bearing fruit. In Galatians 5, we read about the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit by which we minister to fellow believers. Fruit can be seen in our life also when we witness to others and share the Gospel. The moment we become children of God, we are like fruit trees within the Garden of Eden.

Tree of Life. The second tree is the tree of life. This is surprising because in the Garden of Eden, there was no need for the tree of life. Potentially, at least, Adam and Eve had eternal life, so they did not have to eat of the tree of life. Besides that, after they had sinned, they were driven out of the Garden, so that they could not eat of the tree of life.

Again, God put the tree of life in the Garden of Eden to anticipate the heavenly dimension.

Spiritually, the tree of life represents the Lord Jesus Christ. In the kingdom

of God, we partake of Him in order that we might have eternal life. Jesus says in John 15:5, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

Tree of Knowledge. The third tree is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A tree of the knowledge of good in the Garden of Eden is fine; God wants man to know more and more about that which is good, but why a tree of the knowledge of evil?

Evil is entirely alien to a perfect creation. That alone should have frightened Adam and Eve away from the tree of knowledge. The problem, of course, is that Adam and Eve had never experienced evil, and they did not really know how bad evil is. So, deceived by Satan, Eve wanted to find out for herself the meaning of evil. Instead of taking God’s Word by faith, she disobeyed God.

What does the tree of knowledge of good and evil represent spiritually? It represents God’s program to test the faith and obedience of those who claim to have a relationship with Christ. This condition has existed within the kingdom of God from the very beginning.

God tested Abraham when He told him to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. Abraham obeyed, and he passed the test.

On the other hand, when Moses went up to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, the Israelites failed the test. They rebelled against God; they made and worshipped a golden calf.

God’s testing program is present in my life and your life every single day. Every time the temptation of sin comes against us, every time trials and difficulties confront us, we are being tested by God to see how obedient we are and where our faith stands.

Verse 10: And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

During the time of the Garden of Eden, there was a land called Assyria, a land called Ethiopia, and a river called Euphrates, as mentioned in the next few verses, but these have absolutely nothing to do historically with the places and river with the same names that came along later. Do not forget that the Garden of Eden existed before the flood of Noah’s day, which totally devastated the earth; the Noachian flood changed the face of the whole earth.

God assigned names in that day that later would come into the minds of men so that those very nations would typify some spiritual aspect of the Gospel. In the Bible, Ethiopia, Euphrates, and Assyria relate normally to the kingdom of Satan, and that is what God has in view here. The Garden of Eden is a picture of the kingdom of God as it exists in this world, the kingdom of Satan.

Concerning the rivers, first of all, we see that there was a river to water the

garden itself. As we saw earlier, Jesus said in John 7:38, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” So, the picture here tells us that when believers produce the fruit of the Spirit, the first blessing goes right to fellow believers within the kingdom of God. We minister to and are encouraged by one another, and we grow in grace as we fellowship in the Spirit.

Once living water begins to flow from believers, it continues to flow. Hence, God says here, “and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.” In the Bible, the number four, if it has any spiritual dimension, signifies universal-ity. In other words, the Gospel will be proclaimed throughout the world.

Next we will learn what happens as the water goes out.

Verse 11: The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

The word “Pison,” found in the Bible only in this verse, means flowing freely. Thus, it conveys the idea of the Gospel of Christ going out freely from the kingdom of God.

The word “Havilah” is found in six other places in the Bible. Four of them are names of people listed in long genealogy passages. The others are I Samuel 15 and Genesis 25. In these two cases, they are associated with Egypt, which, in turn, is associated spiritually with being in bondage to sin.

In other words, as the Gospel flows out freely into the areas where people are in bondage to sin, it finds gold.

In I Kings 6, God tells us that gold was extensively used in the temple that Solomon built, especially in the inner sanctuary. In Revelation 21:18, we read that the New Holy City is made of pure gold. Job 23:10 tells us, “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

In the Bible, gold commonly refers to true believers; they are the temple of God.

Verse 12: And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

The only other place in the Bible where we find the word “bdellium” is Numbers 11:7, which describes manna as having “the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.” Thus, God associates bdellium with manna, and the bread that came down from heaven. God tells us in John 6 that the Lord Jesus Christ is our heavenly bread.

The word “bdellium” means pearl. Revelation 21 tells us that on the twelve gates of the New Holy City are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (verse 12), and that each of these twelve gates is made of a single pearl (verse 21).

And then there are onyx stones. The most dynamic place in the Bible where these stones are featured is Exodus 28, where God describes the garments which the high priest was to wear: two onyx stones were fastened to the ephod and engraved on these two stones were the twelve names of the sons of Israel. So, like gold, bdellium and the onyx stone are identified with believers, because we are the Israel of God.

What this verse is saying spiritually is that as the Gospel goes forth into the world, where people are in bondage to sin, it will reach those who are the Israel of God. They will hear the Gospel, receive the bread of life, and become believers.

Verse 13: And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

The land of Ethiopia is fairly easy; in the Bible, it is associated with Egypt.

The word "Gihon," which means stream, is found elsewhere only in I Kings 1, where Solomon was anointed king over Israel, and in II Chronicles 32 and 33, which allude to King Hezekiah channeling water from the Gihon spring to the City of David.

Spiritually speaking, every believer is anointed a king by the Holy Spirit. I Peter 2:9 tells us that we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," and Revelation 22:5 declares that believers "shall reign for ever and ever."

In the Bible, the children of God are also pictured as the spiritual Jerusalem or the City of David.

Verse 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.

The word "Hiddekel," or Tigris, means rapidly-running water. It is found in just one other place in the Bible -- Daniel 10:4, where we read in this and the following verse that the prophet Daniel was standing by the River Hiddekel when he received a vision from God.

Daniel was in Babylon then, so the River Hiddekel is identified with Babylon. God uses Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18 to represent the whole dominion of Satan.

Like Babylon, Assyria is also used by God to typify the dominion of Satan. Speaking of His salvation plan, for instance, God says in Zechariah 10:10-11:

I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the

sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

With the word “east” pointing to Christ Himself, the third river is again a picture, spiritually speaking, of the Gospel being sent into the sinful world and the elect therein, upon hearing the Gospel, respond by coming to Christ.

The fourth river, the River Euphrates, is the river that goes right through Babylon, the dominion of the world. The word “Euphrates” means rushing forth.

Thus, these rivers promise that the Gospel will be sent forth freely into the four corners of Satan’s world, and as a result, God’s people will be saved.

Verse 15: And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

In the historical context, God created Adam, and Adam was given the task of caring for that beautiful garden.

Spiritually, Christ is the “man” in the first instance who was put in the kingdom of God. He dressed it by going to the cross. By His death and resurrection, He laid the foundation of the church that He came to build.

The Lord Jesus also came to proclaim the Gospel. Believers are now continuing this work that Christ began. John 20:21: “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

Thus, this verse also points to the believers. They are to till, sow, and cultivate, and God will produce spiritual fruit.

The phrase “keep it” means that believers are also to keep the word or the commandments of the Lord and to keep the body of Christ in unity.

Verse 16: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

This was discussed earlier when we considered the three kinds of trees that were in the Garden of Eden. We are to enjoy the blessings that come from Christian fellowship. There is to be mutual encouragement and mutual exhortation from each other. And we are to partake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The Hebrew actually reads like this, “. . . in the day thou eatest of it dying thou shalt die.” On the day that they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the process of their physical dying began.

Spiritually, we saw that this tree represents a testing program. The day Adam and Eve failed the test, they became spiritually dead. They were under damnation; the wrath of God rested upon them.

Verses 18-20: And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Historically, God tells us that He did not want Adam to be alone, and He brought all the living creatures, which He had created, for Adam to name. Among these creatures, none was found to be suitable to be Adam's helper.

Is this verse saying that spiritually God does not want Jesus to be alone? Yes, indeed. In Romans 8:29, God reveals that He predestinated believers to be conformed to the image of His Son so that Jesus might be the first born among many brothers. Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Adam gave each animal in the Garden of Eden its name. In John 10, the Lord Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd who calls His own sheep by name.

Are we really represented by animals in the Bible? As a matter of fact, yes. In Acts 10, before Peter was sent to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his family, God told him to eat of animals that He has made clean. Peter later said, in verse 28, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

So the verse is saying that the Lord Jesus Christ, looking for a suitable help, gave names to all those whom He had elected before the foundation of the world but could not find anyone yet qualified to be His eternal bride. They all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. They must yet be cleansed; the salvation plan has yet to be carried out.

In the next two verses, God describes how that plan was carried out.

Verses 21-22: And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Historically, we see here how Eve came into existence. God brought her as a bride to Adam, and we have the beginning of the human race.

Spiritually, for Christ to have an eternal bride, He had to die. In the Bible, God frequently uses sleep to represent death, and the word "deep" to describe hell. So, when God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, it was a picture of God

sending the Lord Jesus Christ to die on the cross and endure hell for the sins of believers.

God took a rib from Adam and made a woman. Here the woman, Eve, represents the bride of Christ, which is the body of believers; we learn this from Revelation 21:9.

In what manner is the church made of something coming out from Christ? Remember that after Jesus had died on the cross, a Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear and water and blood came out of His side, His rib cage.

The water is the living water, the Holy Spirit, or the Gospel flowing out of Christ. The blood is the blood He shed for the remission of sins. Thus, had water and blood not flowed out of the Lord Jesus, there would have been no Gospel, no atonement. The living church is formed from that which came out of the side of Christ.

Verse 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.

We read in Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

In the intimate, wonderful example of the church being the bride of Christ, God looks at the physical marriage relationship, and says in Ephesians 5:28-29, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”

Now, notice Ephesians 5:30, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” It is the same language as that which we find in Genesis 2. Thus, we know again that we are on solid ground to see Adam as a picture of Christ and Eve as the whole church that is going to come into existence.

Verse 24: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

In the human relationship, this verse teaches that when a marriage takes place, a new personality, consisting of the man and his wife, is formed; they are so intimate with each other that they cannot be separated. The rib that becomes the wife is an integral part of the man. In a marriage, therefore, the new personality is complete only when the two are together as one.

Spiritually, of course, Christ did not leave His father and mother to have a bride for Himself; Jesus is eternal God. However, we can make the application that when God took a bride for Himself, He made a tremendous commitment to cleave Himself to that bride forevermore, which is why we have total assurance of our salvation. We can be certain that once we are saved, we are forevermore in Christ; we have eternal life.

Note that the flesh was closed up (verse 21); Adam's side was closed up after the rib was taken out, which means that the rib is not to be put back into Adam. The process is not to be reversed. Once Christ had committed to build a church from and for Himself, He will never revoke His commitment to love that church eternally.

Ephesians 5 uses language that further confirms what we have been learning. We read in Ephesians 5:31, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Great Mystery. Notice the amazing statement in Ephesians 5:32, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

When we read Ephesians 5, we often think that God is talking only about the husband-wife relationship, but here He makes it a point to say that He is speaking about Christ and the church. In other words, God is assuring us that He has made a spiritual commitment that the church is to be forever the bride of Christ.

Let us also consider Luke 24. Jesus rose from the grave and appeared to the apostles, and they were frightened because they thought He was a spirit. Jesus then said to them in Luke 24:39, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Do you see the significance of that remark? Jesus is saying in effect, "I have died and have risen. I am still your husband; you are still my bride. I am flesh and bone. You are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

It all ties back to Genesis 2. Jesus went through the whole atonement for His bride.

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

The closing verse of this beautiful chapter relates to I Corinthians 7:3-4, where God says the husband's body belongs to the wife, and the wife's body belongs to the husband. In other words, the husband and wife are to live together in the greatest intimacy possible. This is the way God created the marriage union.

Spiritually, of course, God is talking about Christ and the bride. Before we were saved, we were naked before God; we were loaded with shame. When God looked at us, He saw every one of our ugly sins.

When we become the bride of Christ, as noted earlier, we are covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. When Holy God looks at us in our nakedness, He no longer sees anything that brings shame upon us. That is a beautiful picture of what happens to us once we become saved.

Summary

Genesis 2 is both an historical record and a parable. It is an historical record because it is a true fact of history. In the world that existed before sin entered into it, there was indeed a garden planted called the Garden of Eden. It is a true fact of history that Adam was made from the dust of the earth, that Eve was created out of the side of Adam, and that there was a river flowing out of this garden, going down into other areas of the world.

God is presenting these historical facts in the form of a parable; a parable has spiritual meaning. Oftentimes we see a passage in the Bible and we know at once that there is spiritual meaning. That is not surprising because Jesus says in Mark 4 that He spoke in parables and without a parable Christ did not speak. Of course, Christ is the Word of God and the Bible is the Word of God, but there are passages where the spiritual meaning is hard to discern.

The Bible assures us that Genesis 2 is indeed a parable. Romans 5 states flatly that Adam was a figure of the Christ who was to come. In Ephesians 5, God makes it clear when He quotes “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,” from Genesis 2, that He is speaking of Christ and the church.

We see a tremendous statement of God’s salvation plan in this historical parable. The Garden of Eden is a picture of the kingdom of God that would come into existence in this sin-cursed world; the tree of life represents Christ Himself; the other fruit trees represent the believers, who encourage and help each other; the rivers that flow out represent the sending forth of the Gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit into the sinful world where many will be saved.

In short, God tells us at the very front of the Bible that before the foundation of the earth, He had planned to save people from the sin-cursed world. Under His plan, Jesus had to die on the cross to pay for the sins of His people; and the believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, must send forth the Gospel throughout the world. God also assures us that once saved, believers have eternal life, and nothing can separate believers from the love of God. This is the Good News of Jesus Christ. To Him be all glory and power and praise. Amen.