

# The Creation of the Man - More Details

## Genesis 2:4-17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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