

Genesis Chapter 2

I suppose verses 1 to 3 of this chapter really ought to belong to chapter 1. In that first chapter, we have the record of the 6 days of creation, while in verses 1 to 3 of Ch 2, we have the record of the 7th day. Seven is always viewed in scripture as being a complete whole, so creation really was not complete till the end of the 7th day.

Verse 1 of ch 2 is a summary of all that has gone before – “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them”. On the 7th day, God ended His work...and He rested”. This is further proof that the days of Gen 1 and 2 were days of 24 literal hours and not some lengthy ages of time or evolution. This is brought out in chapter 1. On the 3rd day, plants, herbs, and trees were brought forth. On the 4th day, the sun, moon, and stars were set in their place. Now the sun is the very sustainer of all plant life, so there could hardly have been a vast difference in time between the start of day 3 and the start of day 4. So also on the 7th day – it would be nonsense to suggest that God rested over some lengthy period of time after creation was complete. Hence we believe that each day was on of 24 hours.

So, why then did God rest ? Was it because He was tired? Surely not! I believe it was to establish the principle of a 7th day of rest without labour. In the goodness and kindness of God, He gave the Sabbath day to Israel. It is not till Israel has come out of the slavery of Egypt that God introduced a Sabbath. There would have been no rest for a slave nation in Egypt, but in the wilderness, they experienced their first day of rest.

Exodus 16:23 is the first mention of the Sabbath. “Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord”. The word Sabbath is taken from the verb “to cease” or “to refrain from”. On this first Sabbath, the people were able to refrain from gathering up the manna, for on the 6th day, God sent a double portion. The 7th day was the only day on which the manna did not waste. Truly God was teaching Israel lessons about daily dependence upon Himself.

The Sabbath was enshrined in the Law in Exodus 20 : vv 8 and 12. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”. “The Lord rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it”. The Sabbath was often seen as a burden laid upon Israel, but it was rather an act of gracious kindness on God’s part. The nations around them did not have a day of rest – their toil was endless. Only Israel had a day when no servile work was to be done. Of course, by the time the Lord Jesus came into the world, the Pharisees had made up a myriad of rules on what was, or was not, permitted on the Sabbath day. They laid upon men burdens which they themselves were not willing to bear. Therefore they hated the Lord Jesus who exposed their hypocrisy and who did good on the sabbath day by healing the sick etc. The Lord reminded them of the origin of the Sabbath when He asked - “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil”. ? (Mark 3:4)

Again, He said – “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)

Not only was Israel to keep the 7th day of the week for God, they were also to give the land a sabbath of rest (Lev 25:4). Every 7th year, the land was to be left fallow. But some might ask – “Will we not starve if we do not sow on the 7th year ?”. God promised them that in the 6th year, the crop would yield 3 times it’s normal bounty. There would be enough for the 6th year, the 7th year, and the 8th year when they would sow the seed for the harvest of the 9th year. Thus God was making provision for the 7th year just as He did for the 7th day.

The Sabbath was then a proof of the goodness and the faithfulness of God to His peculiar people. But did Israel keep the Sabbaths? They ended up in captivity for 70 years because for the previous 490 years, the land had been deprived of 70 sabbath years. They lacked

faith in their God. It was the same with their worship. God said that if they brought their tithes and offerings, they would never be impoverished. "Prove me now saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out such a blessing, there will not be room enough to contain it". (Malachi 3:10)

It is easy for us to criticise them, but we have been given exceeding great and precious promises and often fail to live up to them.

In verse 5, we read that God made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew." What the verse is saying is that plant life did not owe its origin to the earth. They did not evolve from earth, but rather God planted them out into the earth like a plantsman entering his plants into the soil. They owed their origin to God and not to the earth itself. The harvest fields of today owe two things to their prosperity – rain, and a farmer to till the soil. The first plants flourished without the help of either. It did not rain upon the earth – rather a mist rose up from the earth and watered the ground. The first rain that ever fell on earth was at the time of the flood. If Noah warned about the flood and the rain, the people might well have asked "What's a flood ?" "What is rain ?" Hebrews 11:5 reminds us of Noah – "Being warned of God of things not seen as yet".

In verse 7 of Gen 2, the Bible tells us more about the formation of Adam. Genesis chapter 2 is an elaboration of Ch 1 and God gives us more details regarding certain things that were done. We have already seen in chapter 1 that the formation of man was a special act in the purpose of God. When other things were brought into being we read expressions like "Let there be..." Or "the earth brought forth...". But divine persons paused before making Adam and they communed together "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". The making of Adam was a special event like no other.

So now in chapter 2, verse 7, we read "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground". Here is the first occurrence of the divine titles together – "Lord God" i.e. "Jehovah Elohim". The ever living, three in one God. The name "Adam" simply means "man". Adam here was not just "made" – He is "formed". He was a unique part of God's creation. The theory of evolution seeks to remove such a thought from the minds of men. By doing away with man's creation by a divine hand, we do away with God Himself. Hence evolution is the greatest lie that has ever been told.

Adam was formed from the earth. So too was the plant life of Ch 2:9 and the beasts and the birds of verse 19. In the whole of God's creation, there was only one exception to this rule, and that was Eve. She was made from a rib taken from the side of Adam. The word "made" here is in fact the verb "built" – the normal word used for building a house or a city. Did God do this just to be different ? Of course not ! God was establishing a principle here that would be realised thousands of years later when God introduced the Church, the Bride of Christ. The Church's Bridegroom is not an earthly man but a heavenly man, the Lord out of heaven. He was not the son of Joseph, but the Son of God. The Lord said in John 17:14 – "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world". Paul tells us in Philip. 3:20 – "Our citizenship is in heaven". Just as Eve was formed from the deep sleep of Adam, so the Church was formed from the deep sleep of the man of Calvary.

Of Adam only do we read that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life". Adam owed his very existence to the breath of God. Paul in I Cor 15:45 contrasts Adam with Christ – "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening s John Ch 1 tells us of the Lord – "In Him was life".

Verses 8 to 20 give us further details regarding Eden itself, the garden of God. Trees are mentioned in verse 9, but of particular importance are the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Verses 10-15 would define the location of Eden. The river Euphrates is mentioned : so too is Hidekel ,or the Tigris. This would put Eden into what is now Iraq, not far from Baghdad.

In verses 16-17, we have the one and only limitation that the Lord placed upon Adam regarding Eden. He could eat of every tree bar one – the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil. It is interesting to compare what Eve says about the word of God in Chapter 3, and what God said to Adam in Ch 2.

Chapter 2 :16-17

Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat 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

Chapter 3: 1-5

We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

We often wonder where wrong doctrine and practice comes from. Sometimes men can be so out of step with divine truth that we can scarcely believe it. We expect this, to a certain extent, from ungodly men, but sometimes even believers can be carried away from the truth of God. A comparison between what God said to Adam in chapter 2 and what Eve said to the serpent in chapter 3 would give us a host of reasons as to where men can go astray. God spoke to Adam in Ch 2, not to Eve, but we have to assume that Adam would faithfully pass on to Eve the exact words of God.

Yet see the changes that Eve has made

What she omitted

God said to Adam – “Of every tree, thou mayest freely eat”. Eve omitted the word “freely” when she spoke to the serpent. In chapter 2, we have a giving, generous, God who invites Adam to eat as much as he desired, with but one exception.

God today is a liberal, giving, God. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph 1). He has not only shown us grace but the riches of His grace, and in a day yet future, the exceeding riches of His grace. When we come to Eph 3, God goes even further in giving us the riches of His glory. But once men have lost sight of the goodness of God, they begin to think of Him as one who deprives, one who takes rather than gives.

What Eve changed

God was very specific when He spoke to Adam about “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. But Eve spoke only of “the tree which is in the midst of the garden”. But which tree ?. There were two trees in the midst of the garden – the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Which one did God mean ?. Well God was very specific but Eve leaves it vague and uncertain. The detail of the word of God is most important. God is specific in His commandments and leaves nothing to chance. Eve falls into error by being vague about the word of God.

Eve also changed the word of God when it came to the penalty that God would inflict upon any transgression. In Ch 2, God warned Adam about eating the fruit of this specific tree – “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die” There was no doubt about the penalty – “Thou shalt surely die.” But what did Eve say – “Lest ye die”. She introduces an element of doubt. If we eat it, we may die. God said “surely die”. By this subtle change, she watered down the impact of the word of God.

Her addition

God spoke only of not eating the fruit but Eve added the words “neither shall ye touch it”. God said nothing about not touching the fruit. Adding to the word of God is just as bad as

taking away from it. In Paul's day, there were certain Jews who came to Antioch saying "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Adding anything to the requirements for salvation was in reality diminishing the role of Christ.

Eve therefore deleted, changed, and added to the words of God. Little wonder then that she was a fertile field into which the serpent could sow his seeds of doubt. He began by questioning the word of God – "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden". A faithful response should have been – "That is exactly what God did say". Instead, Eve lapses into the errors we have just considered.

After Eve has spoken, the devil who began by questioning the word of God, then goes much further still. He denies the word of God. He says to Eve – "Thou shalt not surely die". This is the very opposite to what God has said. So, how can the serpent hope to justify his statement ?. He casts doubts upon the very character of God. If you can destroy someone's character, you can destroy any confidence that any might have about what the person says or does. So, how does the serpent go about his task ?. By claiming that what God was doing was holding back something from Eve. "God doth know that in the day that thou eatest thereof, ye shall be as gods, to know good and evil." God is denying you this fruit because He knows that when you take it, you will become like Himself. So, the serpent argued, God is being mean and selfish, and that's why He is making this restriction.

But does God keep back anything from us ?. In the New Testament, Paul told the saints that he "kept back nothing that is profitable unto you". He could have taught the Corinthians even more but their carnality was the only constraint. So too the writer to the Hebrews. Because of their immaturity, they had need that one taught them again the first principles of the oracles of God". In Luke Ch 10, the Lord said to the Father – "I thank thee.... That thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes".

Returning to Gen Ch 2, in verse 18, the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help meet for him". This thought is repeated in verse 20. – "For Adam, there was not found a help meet for him". In between these two statements, we have the record of Adam's dominion over all the creatures of God's hand. God brought them to Adam, so that Adam could give names to every one. It was an expression of his dominion. Psalm 8, later quoted in Hebrews 2, states this. "In that He put all in subjection to him, He left nothing that was not put under him". The supremacy was total. So, what more could Adam need than this. God provided the answer. "It is not good that the man should be alone."

Adam had no-one to confide in, no-one to share his thoughts and feelings. The Lord Jesus, of whom Adam was a type (Romans 5), was the Son, heir, and upholder of all things. Yet the mind of God was that the Son should have His bride to share His thoughts and feelings.

In Genesis 2:20, have you noticed the repetition of the little word "him". God was saying "I will make for him a help meet for him". Does God simply repeat Himself when He says twice over "for him". I hardly think so. The word "help" means just that – a help ie. someone to be at one's side. This in no way suggests inferiority. God is "a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1) Hebrews 13:6 also says - "The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me". God is there to help, not to be our servant.

There is no such noun as a help-meet. The expression only occurs twice in this chapter. The word "meet" is an adjective meaning "suitable". So for Adam, there was not found a help, suitable for him. Adam's help had to be just right for him.

So, where would God find such a help. As we have already seen, Eve was the only part of God's creation that did not come from the ground. She came from Adam's side. She was formed after the deep sleep that God imposed upon Adam, just as the Church came from the deep sleep of Calvary. It was God therefore who brought the woman to the man. Here

in these simple statements, God is laying down the basis for principles that would be made known over 4,000 years later when the Church came into being.

Why is it then that in the Assembly today, the woman covers her head while the man remains uncovered. Paul argues on the basis of what is said about Adam and Eve in Eden. The woman is to have the sign of authority on her head because, as far as creation is concerned, the woman is of the man ie she owed her very existence to Adam. She was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. She was also made for the man. She was there to be his help. She was made for man, not man for the woman. Paul also speaks in I Cor 11 of the man being "the image and glory of God". Adam was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1). Adam was like God in appearance and God was like him. Hence we read of Moses seeing God's back as he hid in the cleft of the rock. In Matt 18, it is said that the angels do always behold the face of the Father in heaven. In Rev 5, John sees a book on the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. God therefore has a back, a face, and a hand that is spoken of. Adam was made in the image of God. Likeness to God was also true of him, before the Fall ie while still in his innocence. The New Testament is linked strongly with Genesis for what the NT teaches us is that God is working to restore everything that was lost in Genesis and to bring things back to their original state. Hence Paradise on earth will be regained, man will be blessed, Satan judged, Babylon condemned, and a new heavens and a new earth created. Genesis Ch 2

What Adam lost in Eden, God has in measure recovered in the Church. The man is the "image and glory of God". Would we like to see the glory of God in the Assembly. Of course we would, hence the man's head should be uncovered. But the woman is the glory of the man. Do we want to see man's glory in the Assembly ? Surely not, hence she should be covered. The first principles of assembly truths are seen in Genesis 1 and 2.

And what about marriage ?. The first marriage was made by God. The Lord God "brought her unto the man". Marriage today is under attack. 30-40% of all marriages they say will end in divorce. Marriage is being devalued, as men look on it a temporary state into which and out of which we can enter at will. So, not just divorce is prevalent, but so too is re-marriage after divorce. This has become a major issue now in Assembly circles. Can we receive into fellowship those who have been divorced and then have re-married.

The issue of divorce was raised by the Pharisees in Matthew 19 when they asked the Lord – "Is it lawful to put away a wife for every cause". They argued that Moses gave them command that they should write a bill of divorcement when a man put away his wife. The Lord replies only that Moses suffered this because of the hardness of their hearts. But He says, "From the beginning it was not so." He then quotes from Gen Ch 2. – "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife. And they twain shall be one flesh." The word for "cleave" is a strong word meaning to be joined or to stick like glue. Hence husband and wife would no longer be looked upon as two people but one. Hence in Gen 5, God says of this first couple – "god called their name Adam". So much for the young women of today who refrain even from using their husband's name after marriage.

What other issues are there regarding marriage ?.

The "exception clause".

Others would argue today that the Lord allowed an exception when He said "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery".

It is of note however that this "exception clause" is found only in Matthew, the gospel written specially for the Jew in mind, but is not found in the parallel passages of Mark 10 and Luke 16 – written more for a Gentile readership.

Apart from Matthew 5 and Matthew 19, where else is our verse in Gen 2 quoted ?. It is in Eph Ch 5. There the subject matter is the love between a husband and his wife. The relationship is in turn compared to the love that Christ has for His bride the Church. Just

as husband and wife are "one flesh", so Christ and His Church are "one flesh". They are indivisible. Will Christ ever put away His wife and marry another ? Never !!. In Rev 21, at the beginning of eternity, she is still seen as a bride adorned for her husband. So how can we envisage a husband putting away his wife.

One might argue that in theory this is correct but even Christian marriages can fail. Sadly it is very often the case that those involved in a marriage failure are also involved in a failure of their Christian testimony. The two things seem to go together. But the only reason someone would want to divorce his wife would be to allow him to be free in the law of the land to re-marry. The reason why Christian marriages are, relatively speaking, not prone to end in divorce is because Christians take their marriage vows literally – "till death do us part".