

**THE BOOK OF
GENESIS
WITH STUDY NOTES**

Genesis 1-4

A Preacher's Guide to the Book of Genesis



HANDS to the PLOW **MINISTRIES**

HandsToThePlow.org

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Dear Reader,

Genesis has 50 chapters. However, there are only four chapters of Genesis covered in this book. Why did I choose to cover just these four chapters? It isn't because Genesis 5-50 are unimportant. Rather, it is because these four chapters are of particular importance. They are the first four chapters in the entire Bible! These chapters are unique because they introduce the reader to God! These chapters are unique because they speak about things that took place before the world began. These chapters are unique because they speak about human life in a sinless environment, when motives and purposes hadn't been clouded by sin. These chapters are unique because they provide readers with the start of the story of redemption. These chapters are unique because they are quoted (or alluded to) by authors throughout the Old and the New Testament. The psalms make frequent use of these chapters. In book one of the psalms alone (1-41), see Psalms 1, 8, 15, 19, 24, 29, and 33! The prophets make frequent use of these chapters. Jesus makes frequent use of these chapters. And the apostles make frequent use of these chapters.

The rewards for close study of these chapters are many. The words of the prophets will be more understandable. The psalms will grow in richness and beauty. Jesus' words about many subjects will be easier to understand. Paul's theological arguments will become clearer. And the end of Revelation will become sweeter. These chapters are foundational to a true understanding of God, his purpose in creation, people, marriage, sin, Satan, judgment, the church, and, of course, Christ.

This preacher's guide begins with the text and notes for Genesis 1-4. It ends with the text and notes for Revelation 21:1-22:5. These notes from Revelation have been included because the last two chapters of the Bible are closely connected to the first two chapters of the Bible. The last two chapters of the Bible and the first two chapters of the Bible are like bookends holding all of the biblical books together. An understanding of these two bookends will provide the reader with a strong foundation to understand the rest of the biblical story—the many, many chapters between these two bookends. Thus, one of the results of close study of these beginning and ending chapters will be the development of a strong biblical theology covering all of the chapters! Knowing these few scriptures will help you in your quest to know all of scripture.

These notes are not perfect. The scriptures they speak about, however, are perfect. I pray the limitations in these notes do not keep you from seeing the unlimited beauty of God in Christ. May Christ give you strong help as you study these verses. May your faith be strengthened and may you find joy in Christ as you consider these truths. Beyond this, may you find strong help as you proclaim the gospel from these important chapters! These words cannot remain on a page. They are to be proclaimed.

Grace and peace to you.

Tom Kelby

November 11, 2017

How to use this guide

1.

This book contains the text of Genesis 1-4. We have divided the book into different sections. Before each section in this study, the reader will find a brief overview of that section.

2.

After the overview, the reader will find the text from Genesis itself. The text of Genesis appears in the **upper portion** of the page.

3.

This book also contains study notes that refer to certain words or verses or sections in the chapter of Genesis being studied. These study notes are located beneath the text of Genesis in the **lower portion** of the page. The study notes are not sermons. They are intended to help the preacher discover the meaning of Genesis.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that

33 When Moses originally wrote Genesis, it was not divided into chapters. Chapter divisions weren't added to the Bible until well after the time of the Apostles. That is why, at times it may be appropriate to suggest a division for a particular section of scripture that is different from the chapter divisions that are printed in modern Bibles. This seems to be the case in this passage. The first three verses in Genesis 2:4-25 serve as the conclusion to Genesis 1. This is evident because the topic in the first three verses (the seventh day) goes with the topic of Genesis 1 (the first six days). Also, the name for God in 2:1-3 (Elohim) is the name used for God throughout Genesis 1. A different name (Yahweh Elohim) is used in 2:4-25. The name change in verse 4 is one of the signals that a new section is beginning.

34 "These are the generations" (or a phrase like it) is used throughout Genesis (see also 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:30, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, and 37:2). This is an introductory statement. This means these words go with the words that follow them. The connection between verse 4 and what follows is evident because in both the Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) texts verse 5 begins with the word "and". For stylistic reasons, the ESV does not begin verse 5 with the word "and".

The words "These are the generations of ..." indicate that Genesis 2:4 should probably be seen as the true beginning of Genesis 1:1-2:3, the phrase that sets the book in context.

In every other instance in Genesis, the words "These are the generations of ..." are connected to **people** (i.e., "These are the generations of Jacob"). Here, however, the words are connected to a **place**. Since these words are used elsewhere in Genesis to draw the reader's attention to **people** of special significance, the same principle should be followed here: these words draw the reader's attention to a **place** of special significance. What is that place? Is it the heavens and the earth? The significance seems to be in the fact that God has created a place where he is to be worshipped. Moses is telling the story of the worldwide temple! This is confirmed in many places. See, for instance, Colossians 1:15-20 and Revelation 21-22.

The fact that the same phrase is used with both **people** and a **place** indicates that these two things are, in some sense, connected. They both have storylines and these storylines relate to the same thing. Both are related to worship and the place of worship—God's temple.

Sometimes, a particular "These are the generations" introductory phrase is followed by a list. Other times, however, this introductory phrase is followed by a story. Such is the case here. This particular section concludes at 4:26. In that verse, we see people worshipping God: "At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD." The conclusion to this section serves as further confirmation that the main point of this section is about worship.

The Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation) reads, "This is the book of the genealogy of heaven and earth." It is significant to notice how this Ancient Greek translation (also called the LXX) is worded because Matthew 1:1 begins in the exact same way. Matthew wants his readers to think about this verse when they read about the coming of Jesus. Matthew is hoping his readers see Jesus' coming as the beginning of a new creation.

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Genesis 2:4-25

Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-25 are similar. They both involve creation. Yet they are very different. Outlined below are a few of the differences between these chapters.

1. **Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides the reader with a big-picture view of God creating the heavens and the earth.** It is as if the reader is watching God create everything from far away. Close-up details revealing how God is doing his work cannot be seen. It is clear he creates by his word. But we are not seeing, for instance, his "hands" getting dirty in the creation process and his "mouth" breathing breath into Adam. That kind of detail is reserved for Genesis 2:4-25. Specific places on earth aren't referred to in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Everything is distant and from a big-picture perspective. Even people are described in a big-picture way. They are not named and their needs are not discussed. **Genesis 2:4-25, however, is a close-up view.** It is as if the reader is standing on earth watching God intimately connecting with the people and the place he has made.

2. **Genesis 1:1-2:3 is highly structured.** The seven different days that are described one day at a time give the chapter a rhythm and order. Different phrases are repeated throughout the chapter (e.g., "And God said...") and "And God said...".

4.

The study notes in the **lower portion** of the page are numbered. These numbers are red. The red numbers next to each study note are connected to a red number appearing within the text of Genesis in the **upper portion** of the page. The numbers go together.

5.

The study notes sometimes list other passages of scripture. These passages are sometimes from the Old Testament and sometimes from the New Testament. These passages should be carefully examined because they are connected to the passage in Genesis that is being studied.

25 things to keep in mind when reading Genesis 1-4.

1. The early chapters of Genesis, like every other part of the Bible, were written for a specific reason and to accomplish a specific purpose. These chapters, like every other chapter in the Bible, are a gracious gift from God to people. These writings have a purpose: they are intended, like all scripture, “to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”. These chapters in Genesis were “breathed out by God”. They are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (see 2 Timothy 3:14-17). To put it another way, these chapter are intended to help people worship the true God. These words were not written to provide people with a scientific explanation of every aspect of creation. Again, they were written to, along with other scriptures, lead people to Christ and to maturity in Christ. The fact that these words are part of *God’s* sacred writings means that they must not be ignored. Rather, these words must be listened to and obeyed. These words, because they come from God, are true and they cannot be broken (see John 10:35 and Titus 1:2).

2. The early chapters in Genesis are not myths. The words recorded in Genesis concern real people, real places, and real events that took place within time and history. This is evident for many reasons. Here are seven of them. A **first reason** to believe that these words concern real people, places, and events is found in the words and in the writing style used by Moses. Moses does not present Adam and Eve as if they were myths. There are ways Moses could have presented the first people as myths. But Moses does not do this. He presents them as real people. If readers are wondering if reading Moses’s words in this way is the correct way to read Moses’s words, they only need to look to later biblical writers (in both the Old Testament and New Testament). These writers provide readers today with an example of how to read these chapters. Based on the way these writers write about events recorded in these chapters, it is clear they thought Moses was talking about real people,

real places, and real events that took place within time and history. **Second**, other books in the Old Testament declare that Adam actually existed (see 1 Chronicles 1:1 and Hosea 6:7). **Third**, the New Testament authors also speak of Adam and Eve as if they were real (see, for instance, Paul's words in Acts 17:26, 2 Corinthians 11:3, and 1 Timothy 2:13-15). **Fourth**, Jesus himself speaks about events recorded in the first chapters of Genesis as if they actually happened (see Matthew 19:1-12). To put it another way, Jesus, the one we are called to imitate, believed that these events were real. Surely, we are not just to imitate Jesus' actions. We are also to imitate his beliefs. **Fifth**, Jesus is compared to Adam in the New Testament. He is described as the *last Adam* (1 Corinthians 15:45). If the *first Adam* were a myth, this naturally would cause people to question the man described as the *last Adam*—Jesus. If there were no *first Adam* and his deeds did not actually happen and have no lasting consequences, how can we have confidence in the deeds done by the *last Adam*, Jesus (see Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:45-49)? Conversely, the reality of the *last Adam* (Jesus), should cause us to accept the reality of the *first Adam* (Adam). **Sixth**, Jesus is declared to be physically related to Adam (see Luke 3:38). If Adam was not a real man, how can we have faith that Jesus was a real man? And if Jesus was not a real man, we can have no confidence in our salvation for our salvation is tied to the fact that Jesus was a real human. Conversely, since people do not doubt Jesus' humanity, we should not doubt the reality of his ancestor, Adam. **Seventh**, God himself repeatedly declares that he created the heavens and the earth (see Isaiah 45:18). If we believe in God, we will believe his words that he created the heavens and the earth in the way described in his holy word.

3. Throughout the Bible, faith in God's power to deliver his people *in the present* is connected to God's creation of all things *in the past*. An important reason we, as the people of God, need to know and believe the truths about what God did in the distant past when he created the heavens and the earth is we are calling upon God to save us today. We can trust God to keep us in the present because he is the same God who has done mighty deeds in the

past. There are many examples of people doing this in the scriptures. See, for example, the psalmist Asaph's words recorded in Psalm 74:9-17. Asaph is suffering greatly, yet, because of God's mighty acts in the creation of the world, Asaph is able to trust that God is the king and that he has power to deliver his people. Asaph's present hope is based on God's mighty works in the past. See also Psalm 121:2 and 124:8.

4. Faith in the work God will do in the future in creating a new heavens and new earth is connected to the belief that God created all things in the past. Christians trust in God to one day create a new heavens and a new earth. The reason Christians can have faith that God will do this in the future is because he has already done this in the past! Thus, belief in the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation 21-22 is connected to belief in God's original work of creation in Genesis 1-2.

5. God's acts in creating the heavens and the earth distinguish him from every other so-called god. The God of the Bible is the creator of everything. Other gods, whether these gods can be seen (i.e., like an idol), or whether they are unseen (i.e., people worship these gods but they have no image associated with them), have not made anything. Instead, these gods are made by people. See, for instance, Isaiah 40:12-26.

6. Praise of God in the present is connected to his work of creation in the past. People are called to reflect upon God's mighty acts of creation and to praise him for his wisdom, might, and power. See, for instance, Psalm 104.

7. Genesis was written by Moses. It is clear that the authors of the New Testament (see Mark 12:19, Luke 20:28, John 1:45, 5:46, and Romans 10:5) considered Moses to be the author of the writings found in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (Moses also wrote Psalm 90). Moses is a careful historian. In these first chapters of Genesis, he describes the creation of the heavens and the earth, the beginning of sin, the promise of the coming of the Christ, and the beginning of life outside of God's good place. But Moses is much more than just a historian. Based on his writings, it is clear that he is also a

man of faith (see Moses's words in Psalm 90). It is important to know that Moses, even though he lived before the coming of the Christ, knew about the coming of the Christ (see, for instance, Deuteronomy 18:15-19, John 1:45, and 5:46). Moses had a deep love of the Christ, had placed his faith in the Christ, and wrote to draw attention to the Christ (see Acts 3:18-26, Hebrews 11:26-27, and 1 Peter 1:10-12). Like every biblical author, Moses had a theological purpose in mind when he wrote his words. His purpose was not just to recount the creation of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1-2), or of the earth before the days of Abraham (Genesis 1-11). His goal, was to lead people to place their faith in the Christ.

The New Testament testifies that Moses himself considered Christ to be a treasure worth more than all of the treasures of Egypt (see Hebrews 11:26-27). He chose a life of suffering because of his love of the Christ! The reader needs to constantly remember that Moses's goal isn't simply to teach people facts about the history of the heavens and the earth or facts about Abraham or Isaac or the people of Israel or the tabernacle. Moses wants his readers to carefully consider his writings and, because of what they have read and heard, to put their trust in the Christ. In fact, according to Jesus, belief in Moses's writings should lead one to faith in Christ because Moses was writing about the Christ (see John 5:45-47). The careful reader will consider how Moses arranged his material and crafted the words he wrote in order to accomplish this goal.

8. Genesis isn't meant to be read alone. It is meant to be read with the four books following it. To put it another way, the five different books written by Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) actually belong together and they form one large book. Moses crafted the five parts of this one large book with one purpose in mind. Again, that purpose is to lead people to place their faith in the Christ (see Luke 24:25-27, 24:44-49, John 5:45-47, Acts 3:18-24, and 1 Peter 1:10-12). It is the joy and obligation of the preacher to discover how Moses accomplishes this purpose in this one large book made up of five different parts.

9. In the same way that Genesis is just the first part of a much larger book (the five parts are sometimes called “the book of Moses”), the five-part book of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) is the first part of a much longer book (the entire Bible). All parts of the entire Bible fit together. For example, see how the actions of Nehemiah (see Nehemiah 1:8-11) are based on things that are recorded in the writings of Moses. Nehemiah isn't telling a different story than Moses. It is telling the continuation of the story that began in the book of Moses. It is the joy and obligation of the preacher to learn how all parts of this one story fit together and to learn how to preach in such a way that people are reminded of the full story being told in scripture.

10. Genesis 1-3 is similar to the end of the book of Revelation. In many ways, Genesis and Revelation are similar. But, at the same time, they are very different. The story being told in the Bible starts with the creation of the heavens and the earth (see Genesis 1-2). It ends with the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (see Revelation 21-22). The story of the Bible starts with people living in a small garden with a main river and the tree of life in it. The story ends with people in a very large garden city with a main river and the tree of life growing on the banks of the river. The story starts with people who do not eat from the tree of life. It ends with people eating from the tree of life. Genesis 2 is a celebration of the first marriage. Revelation 21 is a celebration of Christ's marriage to his bride—the church. Genesis starts with a serpent who should have been judged by Adam but is allowed to escape. Revelation ends with the serpent being judged by the last Adam (Jesus) and being thrown into an eternal prison. In the beginning of the Bible, the garden is small and has only two people in it. At the end of the Bible, however, the garden has grown to fill the world and is filled with people from every nation! It is the joy and obligation of the preacher to discover the one story being told in this one very large book (Genesis through Revelation).

11. The author wants his readers to know that the God he is writing about is the the only god. People living during the time of Moses worshiped many gods. In these

chapters, Moses only speaks about one God. The God described in Genesis 1-4 is not a small local god with limited power. He is not merely the god of corn, or the god of fertility, or the god of storms. He is the God of all those things and much more! He is the God of everything! He is not the god over one small nation or one particular people group. He is the God over everyone! The God Moses is writing about is the Creator God who made all things and who controls all things. While people today may insist that they are more advanced than ancient peoples and that they do not worship other gods, this is not the case. Even though people may not worship idols, they still worship many different things (i.e., money, sex, power, and possessions). These things, even though they may not be called gods by those who love them, hold god-like power in their lives. We were created to worship. And if we will not worship the true God, we will worship other gods. The faithful preacher will call people to abandon their faith in gods that are not real and that cannot save and to put their faith in the one God described in Genesis.

12. The fact that Genesis starts out with God creating all places, all things, and all people demonstrates that the God of the Bible is not the God of one people group from just one nation. All people owe God worship and praise because he is their creator. It is significant that the story of the creation of all people comes before the story of the people of Israel. Thus, God is not just the God of people who are physically related to Abraham. The God described in Genesis is to be worshiped by all people in all places. There is no place on earth that is outside of his control. All people on earth should worship him. Beyond this, all people on earth will be judged based on whether they worship the one true God and obey him. See Acts 17:24-31.

13. The things recounted in Genesis 1 and 2 happened before sin entered the world. However, Moses is writing to people who live after sin has entered the world. None of Moses's readers, except for Jesus, know what it is like to be without sin. Moses's first audience was the people traveling through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Thus, they could only imagine what life would be like inside the garden in Eden. Moses's readers today are like Moses's first audience. Readers today are living outside of the garden in Eden. Thus,

all of Moses's readers (past and present) are living outside of the garden and have, because of Adam's sin (see Romans 5:12), experienced a great deal of sin, pain, trouble, and torment.

14. Poems are a prominent feature in Genesis and are found throughout the book of Moses. Poetry is distinguished from ordinary narrative because poetry combines words and patterns of words in unique ways. Poetry is meant to stand out from the surrounding text and is meant to be memorable. In the first four chapters alone, poems are found in Genesis 1:27, 2:4, 2:23, 3:14-19, and 4:23-24. The preacher and teacher must learn how to recognize poetry, how to interpret poetry, and how to use poetry in preaching and teaching. Poems should not be ignored. They are significant because they, in their own unique way, summarize important themes of the text and demonstrate the main point of particular passages. Beyond this, they often become useful passages to proclaim Christ and the gospel event. It is the joy and obligation of the preacher to discover and to proclaim the message being spoken by the poems.

15. The reader's focus is to be on the words of the text. There are no eyewitnesses living who can confirm the things Moses records in Genesis 1-4. There were none alive in Moses's day, either. No person witnessed the events recorded in Genesis 1. We have not been given a film of the events described in these chapters. We have no pictures of what took place when God created the heavens and the earth. We have been given *words*. We must be careful to treasure these words as a gift from God. If something else had been better for us, we can rest assured that God would have given it to us. He has, by his goodness, chosen to give us words in a book. These words have been written so that they might produce *faith*. It is tempting to ignore the words and to try to recreate the events that took place behind the text. However, this is not what we have been given. Again, we have been given God's words. We are to trust what he has said through his prophet Moses. The careful preacher will draw the people's attention to the words written in the text and call people to place their faith in the God spoken of in these words.

16. The book of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) reveals that God does more than just create. He also, when it is necessary, destroys his creation. The destruction of God's creation by God himself may be seen in Genesis 6-8 (the flood in the days of Noah), Genesis 19 (the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham and Lot), and Exodus 2-12 (the destruction of Egypt in the days of Moses). In fact, it seems the account of the plagues in Egypt is meant to remind the reader of the opposite of the creation account in Genesis 1. It is as if everything is being **de-created** and going back to chaos. Each account of God destroying his creation is a small picture of the destruction of the heavens and the earth that will take place at the second coming of Christ (see 2 Peter 3:1-13). These mini-destructions should cause people to repent of their sin and to turn to the living God through Jesus Christ.

17. The tabernacle seems to be a miniature version of the garden in Eden. Even though people were banished from the original garden in Eden, by God's grace he called the people of Israel to build a new place where God and his people might dwell together. This new "Eden" was called the tabernacle (see Exodus 25-31). Based on the images found within the tabernacle (i.e., fruit, trees, animals, precious stones and gems, and cherubim), it appears that the tabernacle was intended to be a substitute for the garden in Eden. The tabernacle became the place where God and people were to dwell together in perfect harmony. Of course the tabernacle was not a perfect reflection of the garden in Eden. For instance, because of sin, the tabernacle had many limits on who could come into it and when they could enter into it. Thus, even though there was a tabernacle, there was still a barrier between God and people. This barrier was represented by a curtain. This curtain had cherubim woven into the fabric. It was intended to remind the people of the cherubim that kept Adam and Eve from re-entering the garden so that they might eat from the tree of life (see Genesis 3:24). Eventually, the tabernacle was replaced by a more permanent structure—the temple. The temple was also intended to remind the people of the garden in Eden. This temple, like the tabernacle, included a curtain demonstrating that the way to the tree of life was still not open to people.

Eventually, the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. This was replaced by another temple. That temple, also, was like the garden in Eden. But it, too, included a curtain showing that the way to the tree of life was not yet open to people. Finally, this temple was replaced by the final temple—Jesus Christ (see John 2:18-22). He is the “place” where God and people are able to dwell together in perfect unity. It is significant that, at Jesus’ death, the curtain in the temple was torn. No longer was their any barrier between God and people! The way to God and to the tree of life was now completely open. It is as if God had, upon the death of Jesus, removed the cherubim that were blocking the way to the tree of life! Jesus, like the garden in Eden, is perfectly fruitful. Those who come to him are also fruitful because they are “in Christ” (see John 15:1-17). However, while Christians already experience some of the fruitfulness of the garden in Eden in Christ, they have not yet seen all of the goodness that Christ’s work will bring about. One day, even nature will be freed from all effects of sin (see Romans 8). This will be experienced when Jesus returns (see Revelation 21-22). At that time, Christians will experience something that not even Adam and Eve ever saw—a garden that stretches across the earth! Today, we experience the fruitfulness of Eden by faith. On that day, we will see it with our eyes!

18. The earth was intended to be far more than just a home for people and plants and animals. The heavens and the earth were intended to be a temple of the living God. God created the heavens and the earth as the “theater” in which he is to be worshiped. Each and every item in the heavens and the earth is intended to be constantly singing his praise (see Psalm 148 and Habakkuk 3:3).

19. Genesis 1, 2, and 3 tell the reader how he or she should see the world and world history. These chapters are to be read, to be believed, and to be acted upon. The truths found in these chapters should shape the **worldview** and the **actions** of those who read them.

20. Moses was writing about the Christ. Every verse and chapter in Moses’s five-part book is part of the story of Jesus. See Luke 24:25-27, 24:44-47, John 1:45, 5:39-47, Acts 26:22-23, 28:23, and 1 Peter 1:10-12.

21. God does not change. The God described in Genesis 1-4 (and in the entire Old Testament) is the same God as is described in the New Testament (see James 1:17). Thus, the God who created the world is still overseeing the world. See Acts 17:22-34.

22. The Old Testament is written for Christians today. When New Testament authors called people to read and to believe the scriptures, they were referring to the Old Testament scriptures. This is clear because the New Testament scriptures had not been written yet. See Romans 4:22-25, 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:6-11, and 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

23. The book of Genesis is an example of God's grace, for this book was written to people who were living after the sin of Adam and Eve. The first people rejected God's good word. All those who have followed have done the same. God could have destroyed all people. God, in his mercy, has given sinful people a book! In the same way that Adam and Eve needed to obey God's word as it was delivered to them directly from God, people today need to obey God's word as it comes to us through the scriptures.

24. The early chapters of Genesis are filled with types. A *type* is a person, place, or thing that is similar, in many ways, to a different—and more significant—person, place, or thing. A type is a little like a shadow. For instance, Adam is a type of Christ. He is, in many ways, like Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul calls Jesus the “last Adam” (see Romans 5:12-14). The marriage between Adam and Eve is a type of the “marriage” between Christ and the church. The Apostle Paul can't talk about earthly marriage without starting to talk about the relationship between Christ and the church (see Ephesians 5:22-33). The river flowing from the garden in Genesis 2 is a type of the Holy Spirit (see John 7:37-39 and Ezekiel 47:1-12).

25. It is great sin to refuse to worship the God of the Bible. God is patient. He wants all people to come to him and to worship him. He has come near to people so that they might do this. To refuse to worship God and to give him thanks is a great crime. See Romans 1:18-21.

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Based on the way Moses has organized the book of Genesis, it appears Genesis 1:1-2:3 is intended to be a **preface** to the story of the heavens and the earth that begins in Genesis 2:4 (see the note at Genesis 2:4). The story of the heavens and the earth is not concluded until the end of Revelation 20! In Revelation 21, a new story—the story of the new heavens and the new earth—begins! A **preface** in a book provides the reader with essential background information that helps the reader read the story correctly. That is precisely what Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides to the reader. The reader needs to know the things in Genesis 1:1-2:3 before beginning the story of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 2:4. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is like a big-picture view of the beginning of the story of the heavens and the earth. In Genesis 2:4-25, we are given a close-up view of the same story.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 is about the creation of the “heavens and the earth”. In these verses, the reader is allowed to “see” the perfect triune God working in world history. Based on what the reader sees, he or she should reflect upon the power and character of God and should honor God for his work and give thanks to him (see Romans 1:21). The reader should also, based on the things written in these opening verses, think very hard about the purpose God had in making the universe and everything that is in it.

The reader isn't **told** what God's character is in Genesis 1:1-2:3 (God's character is explicitly described in passages like Exodus 34:6-7). Rather, the reader is **shown** what he is like through his words and by his deeds. Moses's words about God show that he is wise, powerful, creative, kind, generous, loving, and just. The reader learns these things as he or she reads of God's words and deeds in these chapters.

While humans tend to see God's creation from a humanistic perspective, it is important to try to see the heavens and the earth from a biblical perspective. They are intended to be God's sanctuary; the place where he is worshiped. That is why, in other scriptures, the heavens and earth are compared to his sanctuary.

*He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever. **Psalm 78:69***

Even though every word in Genesis 1:1-2:3 (and the entire Bible) is true, these first verses were not intended to function as a science book. These verses were not written to explain scientific facts about the universe and the earth. And these verses were not written to explain the ways natural things work from a scientific perspective. But if these verses weren't intended to teach science, what were they intended to teach? They were written to say something, first and foremost, about God. He is the main point of Genesis 1:1-2:3. These verses were written to lead people living in a very broken world to **faith** in the living God.

As readers today, we need to understand that we live in a very different age from the first people who heard these words read to them. The modern age in which we live impacts how we hear the words of Genesis. We may think of evolution when we think about Genesis 1. We may wonder how these verses fit with the modern belief that there was no Creator and that things evolved by chance. However, it is quite certain that no one in Moses's original audience (the Israelites who were traveling from Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land) had any thoughts about evolution when they heard these verses first read to them. No one believed in evolution at the time Genesis was written, therefore, the original purpose of these verses was not to refute evolution.

While people at the time of Moses did not believe in evolution, this does not mean that they believed that the God of the Bible created everything. The majority of people living in Moses's day worshiped other gods. Some of these gods were created by people in the image of people. This is the opposite of Genesis 1:26-27! And some of the so-called gods that people worshiped were the sun, the moon, the stars, fish, birds, reptiles, and various mammals. These verses in Genesis demonstrate that none of these things are gods. There is only one God. He has always existed. These verses tell part of the story of the one true God.

The Bible is telling the story of people and of creation in the way God wants it to be told. There is information in these verses that ancient peoples would have struggled to accept. There is information in these verses that modern people struggle to accept. But, in both cases, people must trust in what God has said. He is calling people to faith.

These verses demonstrate the limitations that humans have. There is a great deal that we do not know. In fact, people could not know any of the information in this chapter unless it was revealed to them by God. The knowledge of these facts is a gracious gift from God.

The careful reader will read Moses's words and try to discern what he is emphasizing in these verses. Beyond this, the careful reader will worship the one whom Moses wants all people to worship.

Genesis 1

1¹ In the beginning,²

¹ Genesis 1:1-2:3 is highly structured. From the very first verse, there is a great deal of evidence that this has been carefully written. For instance, there are seven words in verse 1 (in the Hebrew). These seven words echo the seven days of creation.

² The “beginning” is not the beginning of all things. Moses is referring to the beginning of the heavens and the earth and everything in them. It is important to know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit already existed when this story began. God is eternal. He has no beginning and no end (see Psalm 93:1-2). Genesis 1:1-2:3 does not explain where God came from or what he was doing before the creation of the heavens and the earth. That is not the story being told in these verses. More information about events that took place before the foundation of the world can be found in other scriptures (see, for instance, John 17:5, 24 and Ephesians 1:3-6).

The Apostle John uses the phrase “In the beginning” to start his gospel. By using these words from Genesis 1:1, it is clear that John wants his readers to think about who Jesus is and to connect Jesus with the creation story (see John 1:1-2). See also 1 John 1:1.

3 **The most important character in the Bible (and in the universe) is introduced in the first verse: God.** God's name is used 35 times in 1:1-2:3. This is a stunning amount of times and is meant to be overwhelming to the reader. Writers do not normally repeat a name this many times. They will normally, once the reader knows who is being referred to, switch to a pronoun (i.e., "he"). Even though Moses could have used the pronoun "he" as he tells this story, he chooses to use God's name repeatedly because this emphasizes that God is the main point of the passage and that God alone is the one who has done these things.

Moses does not try to prove that God exists in these verses. This would be impossible, for it would require a truth greater than God in order to prove his existence. God existed before all things, therefore, nothing else can be used to prove his existence. We have to believe in him by faith. Genesis 1:1 **presupposes** that God exists and that he created all things. This, again, demands faith. From the first verse in the Bible, the reader is being asked to believe a truth about God even though this truth cannot be seen by the reader's eyes.

Genesis 1:1 demonstrates that God created all things. This means other "gods" (i.e., idols) did not create the world or anything in the world. The powerlessness of other gods is taught throughout scripture. See, for instance, Psalm 96:5 and Jeremiah 10:11.

The Hebrew name translated "God" in the English in Genesis 1:1 is **Elohim**. This name is used 699 times in the book of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). It is not the most common name used as a designation of God in the book of Moses. The most common name used of God in the book of Moses is **Yahweh** (this is translated "LORD"—notice all of the capital letters in this word—in the English). Yahweh is used 1,581 times in the book of Moses. **Yahweh** is God's "personal" name. **Elohim** does not emphasize God's personal relationships with people. It is more general. This means **Elohim** is a natural choice for the biblical authors to use when the situation doesn't demand a more personal name to be used. Other names for God are used in other situations. For instance, a different name for God is used beginning in Genesis 2:4—**Yahweh Elohim** (translated as "LORD God" in the English). The different name used beginning in Genesis 2:4 signifies a different aspect of God's being or character is being focused upon. LORD God is used 29 times in the book of Moses.

It is significant to note that **Elohim** is a Hebrew name with a plural ending. This means Hebrew words with this type of ending normally refer to more than one thing. Scholars have debated why there is a plural name for God used here. The simplest and most satisfactory explanation is that God is more than one. However, the verb used in this verse ("**created**") is singular. Thus, in this verse we learn that God is plural but he is also singular. **From the first verse in the Bible, we are seeing hints of the Trinity** (see also how God is referred to in Genesis 1:26)! Sometimes, people argue that Moses could not have meant this because he did not understand that God is more than one. This truth, according to some, was not revealed until much later. While there are certainly key parts of the truth about the triune nature of the godhead that were not revealed until Jesus' coming, this does not mean that none of this truth was known before this time. According to the Apostle Peter, the Old Testament prophets knew far more than many people acknowledge (see 1 Peter 1:10-12). Again, this does not mean that Moses could have clearly defined the Trinity. It does mean, however, that he knew that the one God was a plurality. **He had seen the Trinity in its seed form and was careful to proclaim what he saw.**

created⁴ the heavens and the earth.^{5 6 7}

⁴ The Hebrew word translated **created** in this verse is only used of God in the Bible. He alone is the Creator. **This Hebrew word is never connected to the work of mankind** (see also Genesis 1:21, 1:27, 2:3, 2:4, 5:1-2, 6:7, Exodus 34:10, Numbers 16:30, Deuteronomy 4:32, Psalm 51:10, 89:12, 89:47, 102:18, 104:30, 148:5, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Isaiah 4:5, 40:26, 40:28, 41:20, 42:5, 43:1, 43:7, 43:15, 45:7, 45:8, 45:12, 45:18, 48:7, 54:16, 57:19, 65:17-18, Jeremiah 31:22, Ezekiel 21:30, 28:13, 28:15, Amos 4:13, and Malachi 2:10). This should greatly impact how we understand God and his wisdom, his power, and his work. Because God created the heavens and the earth, he is also the owner of the heavens and the earth and is deeply interested in the events taking place in them. As the Creator, all things are his servants. See Psalm 119:89-91. See also Jeremiah 27:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 6:13, 19-20.

⁵ The phrase “the heavens and the earth” refers to two different places. But these two places have been brought together (here and in many other scriptures) to teach the reader one thing: **God is the creator of everything**. This is similar to how someone (in English), might say, “She knows accounting from A to Z”. In this example, the first and the last letters in the English alphabet are brought together to teach one thing about this person: she knows everything there is to know about accounting. She knows everything from the beginning (A) to the end (Z) and everything in between (B, C, D, E, F, G, etc.)! The same is true in Genesis 1:1. By saying that God created the heavens and the earth, the author is saying that God created everything. There is nothing which he did not create. The fact that God is the Creator of all things should impact how we relate to everything. We should understand that everything is his possession. That is why he is called the “Possessor of heaven and earth” (see Genesis 14:19, 22). It will be a great help to the preacher or teacher to study how “the heavens and the earth” are used together in the scriptures. See also Genesis 2:1, 2:4, 14:19, 14:22, Exodus 20:11, 31:17, Deuteronomy 4:26, 30:19, 31:28, 2 Kings 19:15, 2 Chronicles 2:12, Ezra 5:11 Psalm 69:34, 113:6, 115:15, 121:2, 124:8, 134:3, 146:6, Isaiah 37:16, Jeremiah 10:11, 23:24, 32:17, 33:25, 51:48, Joel 3:16, Habakkuk 3:3, Haggai 2:6, 2:21, Matthew 5:18, 11:25, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 10:21, 16:17, 21:33, Acts 17:24, 2 Peter 3:7, and Revelation 14:7.

It is significant to note that images from the heavens (cherubim) and the earth (fruit, flowers, trees, and animals) were found throughout the temple (see 1 Kings 6-8). This seems to be an indication that the temple was meant to be a small version of the heavens and the earth. In other words, the heavens and the earth were created to be a temple where God was to be worshiped. Because Adam and Eve broke God’s commandments, this purpose for the heavens and the earth was not fulfilled. Jesus, the last Adam, has come so that the heavens and the earth may, as was originally planned, serve as God’s temple where everything worships him. See Psalm 148:3-5, 150:6, Isaiah 11:9, and Habakkuk 2:14.

⁶ Genesis 1:1-2:3 tells the story of the **beginning** of “the heavens and the earth”. Scripture also speaks about the **ending** of the heavens and the earth (see Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, and 2 Peter 3:1-13). A new heaven and earth are spoken of in many passages. See, for instance, Isaiah 65:17, Romans 8, 2 Peter 3:13, and Revelation 21-22.

⁷ It is significant to note that we are not told about anything that caused God to create the heavens and the earth. There was nothing or no one to force him to create the heavens and the earth. He had no needs that needed to be met by his creation. He was not under any compulsion to solve a problem. Thus, God created the earth (and people) for his own reasons. The text shows him doing this by his own choice. It is the joy and obligation of each person on earth to discover God’s good purposes in creating the earth. Fortunately, God has revealed his good purposes for creating all things in many scriptures. See, for instance, Genesis 1:26-28, Isaiah 43:6-7, Acts 17:26-27, and Ephesians 1:10.

2 The earth was without form and void,⁸ and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.⁹

3 And God said,¹⁰ “Let there be light,” and there was light.¹¹ **4** And God

⁸ God **intentionally** created the earth without form and void. He could have created it fully formed. Why did he create the earth in this way? He did it this way, it appears, so people could see how God works in the world. In these first verses we learn that **God brings things to order by his word (verse 3) and by his Spirit (verse 2)**. Regarding Christ being the eternal Word of God, see John 1:1-17.

The words “without form and void” are, in the Hebrew, rare words. They are also rhyming words (they are pronounced **Tohu** and **Bohu**). The fact that these words rhyme means that they are easy to remember. When later Biblical authors repeat these rare rhyming words, it’s a clue that the author wants the reader to think of Genesis 1:2. Jeremiah quotes these words in Jeremiah 4:23. He declares that the idolatry of God’s people has caused the earth to return to its “Tohu and Bohu” state (“without form and void”). This is a curse because of idolatry! The prophet Isaiah quotes these words in Isaiah 34:10-11. He declares that the enemies of God’s people will become “Tohu and Bohu”. This is a curse because of their rebellion! Today, the church is used by God to bring people out of their “Tohu and Bohu” state.

⁹ The Holy Spirit is hovering over the waters. He is, it appears, waiting for God’s word to be given so that he might execute God’s plans. God does nothing except by his Spirit (see, for instance, Acts 11:28, 13:4, 15:8, 16:6, Romans 2:29, 8:13, 15:13, 15:16, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 12:9, and 12:11). God’s word and God’s Spirit always work together in perfect harmony. God’s Spirit is still working in the world. He is no longer “hovering”, waiting for God’s word to be given. He has “rested” on Jesus, thus, all that is connected to Christ has the power of God’s Spirit behind it. See Mark 1:9-11 and John 3:34. The Hebrew verb and verb form connected to the Spirit “hovering” in Genesis 1:2 is also used in Deuteronomy 32:11. That’s the only place in the Old Testament this same verb in this form is used! Deuteronomy 32:10-11 speaks of God finding the Israelites in “Tohu” (see note 8) and hovering over them so that they might be cared for and brought from a place of Tohu to a better place (the Promised Land!). Thus, the Israelites entering into the Promised Land is being compared to Genesis 1:2. It’s the same story! These two passages seem to be teaching that one of the Spirit’s roles is to bring people from Tohu into God’s good place. He did that in Genesis, he was doing that for the Israelites, and he is doing the same thing with God’s people today!

¹⁰ From the beginning of Genesis, there is an emphasis on God’s words. God is not silent. He is a speaking God. He creates by his words. He instructs by his words. He blesses by his words. He commands by his words. He defines things as good or evil by his words. He judges by his words. These first chapters demonstrate that everything God says comes to pass. That is why Moses repeatedly says, “And it was so”. People are called to listen to God’s words and to obey them. The psalmist in Psalm 29 is thinking of this passage (and others) when he speaks of God’s powerful voice.

¹¹ God makes light (verse 3) even before he creates the sun (verses 14-19). Thus, the sun is not presented as the solution to the darkness in the world. The solution to the darkness in the world is the light that comes from God. This should immediately remind preachers of New Testament passages like John 1:4-9, 8:12, 9:5, and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. In all of these passages, Jesus is called the light. It is important to note that the Bible ends in the way it begins. There is a new creation, and the sun is not needed in order to give the new creation light: “And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it” (Revelation 21:23-24). Spiritually, God calls people out of darkness so that they might dwell in his “marvelous light”. See Isaiah 43:1-7, 16-21, and 1 Peter 2:9-10.

saw that the light was good.¹² And God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the¹³ first day.¹⁴

6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” **7** And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. **8** And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

¹² God is the one who defines what is good and what is evil. It is significant that a comment about something being “good” is repeated seven different times in Genesis 1. The number seven plays a significant role in the creation account. As was stated earlier, there are seven words in verse 1 (in the Hebrew). There are seven “and it was good” type statements. There are seven days of creation. The repetition of the number seven makes the passage easier to memorize. The repetition of the number seven also reminds the reader of God’s rest on the seventh day. This should create a desire in people to find that rest themselves. This rest only comes through Jesus (see Matthew 11:28 and Hebrews 3-4).

¹³ While the ESV reads “**the** first day” (see also the NIV 2011, NLT, NET, HCSB) the Hebrew text reads, “**a** first day”. This difference between the Hebrew and these English translations may also be seen in days 2, 3, 4, and 5. **It is not until day six that the definite article is used in the Hebrew** (see 1:31). That day is described as “**the** sixth day”. This difference between days 1-5 (all introduced by the article “a”) and day 6 (introduced by the article “the”) is probably intentional. This is a way the author focuses attention on the sixth day—the day God created people so that they might bring his image into all the earth. The use of the article “the” on the sixth day is one of the ways the author demonstrates that people are the high point of creation because they are the ones charged with bringing God’s glory everywhere. Regarding the importance of people, see Psalm 8.

¹⁴ “And there was evening and there was morning” is an unusual way to speak of a 24-hour period. Normally, when people are describing a day, they start with the morning and end with the evening. In this normal way of describing things, the darkness is the conclusion. It is as if the darkness has defeated the light. Genesis 1:1-2:3 does the exact opposite. By beginning with the evening and ending with the morning, the Bible seems to be highlighting the morning. This highlights the victory that God continually has over darkness. Every time the sun rises, we are reminded that God is the one who causes his light to shine in the darkness. With the rising of the sun, God’s people are reminded that God is victorious over sin and chaos.

It is interesting to study Jeremiah 33:19-22 along with this passage. In these verses, God describes a covenant he made with the day and with the night. This means he not only created them, he also made a strong agreement with them. The terms of this agreement are not referred to in Genesis 1. However, it would appear that his agreement is that he will continue to cause day and night to come at their appointed time during the entire age of the heavens and the earth. He made this covenant with the day and with the night to demonstrate, among other things, how sure his promises are to his people regarding the coming of the Christ. Thus, the steady continuance of day and night serve a function to remind people of God’s keeping of all of his promises—especially his promise to bring in an everlasting King to rule over God’s people.

9 And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.”¹⁵ And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.¹⁶ **11** And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.¹⁷ **14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.”¹⁸ And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day¹⁹ and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.²⁰ **17** And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

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- ¹⁵ God is the one who creates a suitable place for humans to dwell. This is a major part of the storyline of the Bible. It is significant that Christ, in the gospels, brings the Apostles from the wild sea to dry land.
- ¹⁶ In humanistic thinking, people decide what is good. These definitions of what is good may change over time and are different in different cultures. The Bible, however, teaches that God alone decides what is good. He also decides what is evil. God’s definitions are true and they do not change over time. Again, the phrase “it was good” (or one like it) is repeated seven times in Genesis 1:1-2:3.
- ¹⁷ It is significant that seeds sprout **on the third day**. This is the first hint we see of new life coming on the third day. From the beginning of the Bible, we are being prepared to recognize the gospel message of Christ dying and rising on the third day. Throughout the Old Testament, significant events happen on the third day. This prepares readers for the ultimate third day.
- ¹⁸ From the earliest days, people have worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. Here, we see that they were created to serve as signs and to “give light upon the earth”. The psalmist was thinking about the sun, moon, and stars when he wrote Psalm 8.
- ¹⁹ The word “sun” isn’t used in this passage. The sun is described as “the greater light”. It is significant that the original audience of this book had just come out of Egypt where people worshiped the sun. It appears God doesn’t want his people thinking that the sun is a god. It is created. That may be why it isn’t called by its normal name here.
- ²⁰ The sun, moon, and stars are not to be worshiped. They were created for those on earth. This is not just to provide us with light. One of the reasons the sun, moon, and stars exist is so that we might have a constant reminder of God’s power. See Deuteronomy 4:19, Job 9:7, 22:12, 25:5, 38:31-33, Psalm 8:3, 147:4, Isaiah 40:26, 45:12, and Jeremiah 31:35. The stars serve to remind people of the number of Abraham’s offspring. See Genesis 15:5-6.

18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” **21** So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** And God blessed them, saying,²¹ “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. **25** And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²²

²¹ God’s words bring blessing with them. Thus, his speaking puts things in motion so that his creation can accomplish what he has commanded. This should impact how we see God’s words to humans in Genesis 1:28. We can be fruitful and multiply because of his blessing.

²² These creatures were not created solely so that they might fill the earth or to bring enjoyment to humans (even though they do both of these things). These creatures were created to point to something beyond themselves. Like everything else in the universe, these creatures were created to bring praise to God (see Psalm 148). Their very existence is a testimony of his excellence. An example of this may be seen in the angels’ reaction to God’s creation. Their reaction should be our reaction! According to Job 38:7, the “sons of God shouted for joy” when they watched God creating the earth. Again, we see that the heavens and the earth exist to be a temple where praise is constantly brought to God.

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our²³ image, after our likeness.²⁴ And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the

²³ Carefully consider the words “us” and “our” in verse 26. As in verse one (see the footnote regarding the Hebrew name Elohim), the most natural reading of the text draws people to the conclusion that God is more than one. The God of the Bible is plural, yet he is, at the same time, singular. He (singular) is a community (plural). The Trinity is not an invention of people who were living after the time of the Apostles. While the word Trinity may have not been used until after the time of the Apostles, the reality of the Trinity was always present. Hints of this reality may be seen from the very first chapter of the Bible. Indeed, it would be most surprising if this truth did not appear—at least in some form—in the pages of the Old Testament, for God is the most important character in the Bible. Other important passages related to the Trinity in the Old Testament include Psalm 45:7 (quoted in Hebrews 1:9) and Isaiah 9:6.

It is important to understand that God did not make people because of a need within the Trinity. For instance, he did not create people because he needed to be loved or needed a place to express his love. If that were the case, this would mean God is not perfect, for he would need something else to bring him to perfection. But God is perfect. He has no needs. He didn't need love because **God is love** and **love was constantly being expressed between the members of the Trinity before the foundation of the world** (see 1 John 4:8 and John 17:24). God did not create people because he was lacking fellowship. He had fellowship in the Trinity.

²⁴ God's words in verse 26 are different from the words he uses when he creates everything else. God's words are different in at least two ways. **First**, God's words about the creation of humans are different because they are highly personal. The words God uses to create everything else are fairly impersonal. He says, “Let there be light”, or “Let there be an expanse”. The “Let there be” words seem to purposely keep the created objects at a distance from God. It is creation happening by the triune God, but, at the same time, the creating process is described as if it is not being done by the triune God. But by using the words “Let us make”, God has connected the creation of people to the godhead! The word choice inevitably leads the reader to the conclusion that the triune God is, with humans alone, “getting his hands dirty” in the creation process. Surely this demonstrates the great importance of humans! **Second**, the triune God's words about humans are different from his words about everything else because only humans are made in God's “image”! What does it mean to be made in the image of the triune God? It means the triune God is, somehow, reflected in people. This doesn't mean people physically look like God, for God is a spirit. But it does mean that people, both individually and corporately, serve as living representations of the triune God. Like a mirror, people somehow reflect the triune God's character, presence, power, glory, and loving community to the rest of humanity and to the rest of the universe (see Ephesians 3:10)!

earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”²⁵

27

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;

²⁵ People being created in God’s image has to do with the very essence of what it means to be human. To be human is to be like God. We are a reflection of the triune God. But what are we, as God’s image-bearers, to do? What is our job description? How are we to act if we are to properly reflect his image? The answer is found in the second half of verse 26. This verse speaks of people having “dominion” over the other creatures which God made. The two halves of this verse belong together. Thus, the fact that humans are made in God’s image brings with it the responsibility for humans to rule and reign in imitation of God’s rule and reign. Humans are to rule and reign within a limited sphere (God’s creation on earth). God rules in an unlimited sphere (everywhere). Thus, humans are God’s co-regents. We rule and reign with him, for him, and, always, under him. For example, Adam and Eve were to rule over “every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”. This is significant because Satan appears as a creeping thing in Genesis 3:1. Based on God’s words in Genesis 1:26, Adam should have ruled over the serpent. **To put it another way, God’s rule over the serpent was to be exercised by Adam.** This did not happen. Instead, the serpent ruled over Adam! Thus, God’s rule over the serpent was not enforced as it should have been. The terrible consequences of Adam’s failed co-regency have been felt by all humans and by all creation. Fortunately, while the first Adam did not take dominion for God when he encountered the serpent, the last Adam (Jesus) did. Thus, Jesus shows us what it is like to be made in the image of God. Everything he said and did was a reflection of the heart of God the Father (see John 5:19)! He exercised God’s rule and reign on the earth! Jesus did not yield to Satan or to those working under him. Instead, he ruled over them by God’s word (see Matthew 4:1-11)! Jesus so perfectly bears God’s image he is called the “image of the invisible God” (see Colossians 1:15). And Jesus calls all those who are in him to rule with him (see Luke 10:19, Matthew 28:18-20, and Revelation 12). For a poetic commentary on Genesis 1:26, see Psalm 8. This psalm is very important. This psalm is connected to Jesus and to all those who are in him.

male and female he created them.²⁶

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them,²⁷ “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living

²⁶ This is the first poem in the Bible. Poetry is heightened speech. It is set apart from narrative because of the unique words it uses and the way these words are put together. These words are arranged in a pattern of some sort. Hebrew poetry follows a pattern called **parallelism**. Usually, there are two statements which are especially connected to each other. Sometimes, like in this poem, there are three statements that are especially connected. In parallelism, the second statement repeats the idea of the first statement. But it doesn't just repeat it. Usually it sharpens or strengthens it in some way.

The fact that a poem is used when people are created is another demonstration of how important humans are. No other creature or part of creation was given a poem—this is very significant! This particular poem emphasizes that God is the one who made people. This thought is repeated three times. It is very important. **When we think of a person we are, first and foremost, to remember that God made that person.** This is true of every person from every race. This poem emphasizes that God made people in his image. The fact that this is repeated in a poem just after it was recorded a verse earlier demonstrates how important this is. Nothing else in all of creation was made to reflect God. This is what makes people precious. This is what makes life—from conception to death—precious. We value life because we value God! To kill or to damage a person is to kill or to damage something made in God's image. The third statement of the poem about “male and female” emphasizes that this is true of all people, whether they are male or female. All people from all races and all genders have great worth because all people are made in God's image. When we damage another human, we are striking something bearing God's image! All people (whether born or unborn, whether handicapped or healthy, whether young or old) are made in God's image and are, therefore, precious. This explains why God will “require a reckoning for the life of man” from every one who spills human blood (Genesis 9:5).

²⁷ As in verse 22, God's words bring blessing. Thus, his speaking put things in motion so that Adam and Eve could accomplish what he commanded. They failed in this task even though God's blessing was helping them! The fact that Adam and Eve failed does not mean God has changed his purpose. He still wants people to bring his image to the ends of the earth. This happens through Jesus Christ. See Psalm 8 and Matthew 28:18-20.

thing that moves on the earth.”²⁸ **29** And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. **30** And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. **31** And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.²⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

28 People are to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth and subdue it so that God’s image might fill every place. That doesn’t mean this is an easy task. This verse describes a long process involving hard work. Of course, Adam and Eve sinned before they really started accomplishing this task. In fact, one of the creatures, a serpent, took dominion over them (see Genesis 3)! The last Adam, Jesus Christ, never sinned and the serpent (Satan) did not take dominion over Jesus (see Mark 1:12-13)! Because of his death and resurrection, Jesus has started accomplishing this task. He is continuing to accomplish God’s purposes through the church. It will one day be entirely completed. Jesus is fruitful and all who are in him bear good fruit. God’s image is, through Christ, being brought throughout the entire earth. Regarding the fruitfulness of Christ and those who are in him, see, for instance, John 15:1-17 and Galatians 5:22-23.

It is no accident that the author of Acts (Paul’s traveling companion Luke) describes how the church was multiplying using Greek words that are also used in the Greek translation of Genesis 1:28 (this Greek translation of the Old Testament is sometimes called the LXX). It appears Luke wants his readers to make the connection between God’s command in Genesis 1:28 and the church’s growth in the first century! For instance, in Acts 6:7, Luke says, “And the word of God continued to **increase**, and the number of the disciples **multiplied** greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith”. And in Acts 12:24 Luke says: “But the word of God **increased** and **multiplied**”. These same words are used in Genesis 1:28! Luke sees the growth of the church as the fulfillment of God’s command in Genesis 1:28, and he wants his readers to see the connection as well (see, for instance, Acts 1:15, 2:41, 4:4, 6:1, 6:7, 8:1-8, 8:26-40, 9:31, and 10:44-48). Churches today should consider that they, like these early churches, are commanded to be fruitful and multiply. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God, this is happening all over the earth to this very day.

29 In this verse, Moses declares that God examined **all** that he had made and he saw that it was “very good”. Six different times before this verse, Moses told his readers that God saw that **a particular thing** was **good**. Now, the seventh time, Moses tells his readers that God saw that **everything** was **very good**. Obviously, there is something very important being emphasized in all these references to the goodness of what God made. Why do we need to repeatedly hear this? This demonstrates that God and goodness go together. They cannot be separated (see James 1:17). This fact should impact how we relate to God. We can trust that his work in our lives will result in good (see Romans 8:28).

Genesis 2

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. **2** And on the seventh day³⁰ God finished his work that he had done,³¹ and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.³²

30 Interestingly, the Greek (LXX—also called the Septuagint) and a few other ancient translations says that God finished his work on the “sixth day”. This may have been an attempt by the translators to “correct” what they saw as an error in the Hebrew.

31 Three different times in verses 2 and 3, Moses declares that God finished the “work that he had done”! Moses’s emphasis on this fact demonstrates that this is very important for the people of God to know. This is important because it emphasizes that God alone created everything. No other gods were part of this work.

32 The description of the seventh day is very different from the other days. **First**, no work is described on this day. **Second**, the description of this day doesn’t conclude with, “And there was evening and there was morning”. All of the other days are described in a way that emphasizes their completion. This day, at least from the perspective of the author, seems to have no end. Later writers will speak about the significance of this day continuing on (see Psalm 95:7-11 and Hebrews 3 and 4). **Third**, this day is not followed by any other days. No other days are described after this seventh day. All of the other days are followed by an additional day. The reader needs to know that Moses intentionally chose to describe the seventh day in this way and not in the way he described the other days. Why did he do this? Is it possible that he wants his readers (his first readers were definitely not resting in the wilderness when Moses read these words to them) to long to enter into God’s rest? This rest, for them and for us, is only found in Christ. See Matthew 11:28 and Exodus 33:14.

Interestingly, there is an emphasis on mankind working in the rest of this chapter. There is also an emphasis on mankind working in Genesis 3. In order for mankind to rest like God, mankind’s work would need to be completed. What, then, was the significance of a sabbath day’s rest? It was a weekly reminder of God’s work that had been completed. It was a weekly reminder that mankind still had work to do and should, like God, finish its work. It was a reminder that mankind should join God in his rest. A day a week of rest was a reminder that God finished his work and that mankind, too, must finish its work. And it was a weekly invitation to join God in his rest and to, at least for one day, “taste” God’s rest.

It is worth noting that creation is patterned after a week that humans experience. The most basic rhythm of life—the work week—was created by God to remind us of him and our need for him. Every new week is a fresh reminder of God and his plans for people.

Genesis 2:4-25

Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-25 are similar. They both involve creation. Yet they are very different. Outlined below are a few of the differences between these chapters.

1. Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides the reader with a big-picture view of God creating the heavens and the earth. It is as if the reader is watching God create everything from far away. Close-up details revealing how God is doing his work cannot be seen. It is clear he creates by his word. But we are not seeing, for instance, his “hands” getting dirty in the creation process and his “mouth” breathing breath into Adam. That kind of detail is reserved for Genesis 2:4-25. Specific places on earth aren’t referred to in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Everything is distant and from a big-picture perspective. Even people are described in a big-picture way. They are not named and their needs are not discussed. **Genesis 2:4-25, however, is a close-up view.** It is as if the reader is standing on earth watching God intimately connecting with the people and the place he has made.

2. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is highly structured. The seven different days that are described one day at a time give Moses’s preface a rhythm and order. Different phrases are repeated over and over (i.e., “And it was so”, “And God said”, “And God saw that it was good”). We expect numbers to increase: a first day, a second day, a third day, etc.

Genesis 2:4-25 is not highly structured. It feels, in a sense, much more earthy. It is as if the reader has zoomed in too close to see the pattern and structure. But closeness lets the reader experience God in new ways. For instance, now the reader can “see” his hands in the dirt and “feel” his breath.

3. Genesis 1:1-2:3 uses the “default” name of God—Elohim. It is appropriate for God’s “default” name to be used in Genesis 1:1-2:3, because these verses aren’t primarily about the special relationship between God and his people. They involve God creating all things and all people—again, we see these things from a distance. The name Elohim is used an amazing 35 times in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Moses repeats God’s name so often to emphasize that he and he alone did the work described in these first verses. **Genesis 2:4-25 pairs the covenant name of God (Yahweh) with the name Elohim. In these verses, Elohim is called Yahweh Elohim 11 times** (this is written as LORD God in the ESV). It is appropriate that God’s covenant name is used in Genesis 2:4-25 because God has come near to his people (Adam and Eve) and has forged a close relationship with

them. Thus, even from the way God's name is used in the Bible, our understanding of him and the way he relates to his people is being built. The fact that "Elohim" and "Yahweh" are pair together removes confusion about the number of gods Moses is referring to. He is talking about just one god.

4. Genesis 1:1-2:3 focuses on the entire universe. Genesis 2:4-25 focuses on one specific place within the universe—a garden in Eden. In the same way that a camera focuses on the most important object, Genesis 2:4-25 focuses the reader's attention upon the most important place in the universe—the place where God dwells with people and is worshiped by people. Tragically, because of sin, Adam and Eve are expelled from this place by God. Part of the story of the Bible is the story of God re-establishing a place where his people can, once again, dwell with him and worship him. After Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, the new place where God and people dwell together is the tabernacle. The tabernacle seems to be designed to remind the worshiper of the garden in Eden. For instance, fruit and trees and precious stones are found throughout the tabernacle and even upon the embroidered fabrics and the clothing of the priests. When the worshiper looked at the tabernacle, he or she would have been reminded of the garden in Eden. Even the "furniture" in the tabernacle seems intended to remind people of these first verses in Genesis. For instance, the lampstand with its seven lamps (remember, seven is a number especially connected with creation) seems intended to be a symbol of the tree of life. Eventually, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. That, like the tabernacle, was filled with things that seem designed to remind the worshipers of Eden. The temple seemed to be permanent. However, because of sin, this temple was destroyed. This was a tragedy. Would God and people never again dwell together? Later, a new temple was built. However, that temple, also, was destroyed. But this does not mean that God no longer was willing to dwell with people. Jesus came to earth and "tabernacled" with people. He is the new "place" where God and people meet (see John 1:14 and 2:18-22). Now, God dwells in the temple of which Jesus is the Cornerstone (see Ephesians 2:19-22). In the same way that the tabernacle and the temple were filled with images intended to remind people of the garden (fruit, precious stones, etc.), the language used to describe the church seems intended to remind people of the garden in Eden (i.e., the fruitfulness of believers in John 15, the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, and churches being described as lampstands in Revelation 2 and 3). In

the same way that the Bible begins with the reader focused on the garden, it ends with the reader focused on a garden. In Genesis, the garden was small. In Revelation, it is massive. In Genesis, people were not allowed to stay in the garden. In Revelation, people are dwelling with God forever.

(Below are notes related to the poem in Genesis 2:4)

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

This is the second poem in the Bible. As is typical of biblical poetry, the two parts of this poem (sometimes called “versets”) are **parallel** to each other. The second verset is like the first one. But parallelism is not the only pattern used in biblical poetry. Some biblical poems also include other patterns. That is the case with this poem. Key words in this poem have been intentionally arranged to form a pattern called a **chiasm**. Biblical writers use **chiasms** to draw attention to very important points. The word **chiasm** is connected to the Greek letter **chi** (this is why the pattern is called a chi-asm). The Greek letter chi looks like the English letter X. In the same way that the bottom of an X is an exact copy, in reverse, of the top half of an X, in a chiasm the writer deliberately makes a pattern so that the first half of the work is copied, in reverse, by the second half of the work.

Consider, again, the poem in Genesis 2:4:

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

The first half of the poem in Genesis 2:4 is “built” using three main words.

- A. Heavens
- B. Earth
- C. Created

The second half of the poem features the same words (or, in the case of “created”, a very similar word—“made”), but in reverse order.

- C. Made
- B. Earth
- A. Heavens

It is significant to note that the name “LORD God” is found between the two halves of the chiasm. Thus, when the name LORD God is added to the chiasm, the pattern looks like this:

- A. Heavens
- B. Earth
- C. Created
- D. LORD God
- C. Made
- B. Earth
- A. Heavens

The main point of the chiasmic pattern is found in the middle of the chiasm. The main point is that God made everything. But notice the personal name for God is used here—Yahweh Elohim (this is written as LORD God in most English translations). This prevents worshipers of other gods from claiming that this verse is speaking about their particular god. Moses is only talking about the God of the Bible. Moses makes the stunning proclamation that Yahweh Elohim and Yahweh Elohim alone made everything. That is why Moses uses God’s personal name. This should lead people to worship. It should also lead people to abandon gods who are not gods and who have no power to create (or to save).

It is interesting that Psalm 148:13, like the second half of this chiasm, reverses the normal order of heaven and earth: “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above **earth and heaven**”. The psalmist was thinking about the early chapters of Genesis and may have been thinking about this poem when he used the words “earth and heaven” in that unusual order. Psalm 148 is about all creation praising Yahweh for what he has done. The last verse in the psalm (verse 14) celebrates the fact that Yahweh has “raised up a horn for his people”. The “horn” is a reference to the Christ—the one who would eventually crush the serpent (see Genesis 3:15)!

Genesis 2:4-25³³

4 These are the generations³⁴

of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that

³³ When Moses originally wrote Genesis, it was not divided into chapters. Chapter divisions weren't added to the Bible until well after the time of the Apostles. That is why, at times, it may be appropriate to suggest a division for a particular section of scripture that is different from the chapter divisions that are printed in modern Bibles. This seems to be the case in this passage. The first three verses in Genesis 2 likely serve as the conclusion to Genesis 1. This is evident because the topic in the first three verses (the seventh day) goes with the topic of Genesis 1 (the first six days). Also, the name for God in 2:1-3 (Elohim) is the name used for God throughout Genesis 1. A different name (Yahweh Elohim) is used in 2:4-3:24. The name change in verse 4 is one of the signals that a new section is beginning.

³⁴ "These are the generations" (or a phrase like it) is used throughout Genesis (see also 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, and 37:2). This is an introductory statement. This means these words go with the words that follow them. The connection between verse 4 and what follows is evident because in both the Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) texts verse 5 begins with the word "and". For stylistic reasons, the ESV does not begin verse 5 with the word "and".

The words "These are the generations of ..." indicate that Genesis 2:4 should probably be seen as the true beginning of Genesis. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is the preface that sets the book in context.

In every other instance in Genesis, the words "These are the generations of ..." are connected to **people** (i.e., "These are the generations of Jacob"). Here, however, the words are connected to a **place**. Since these words are used elsewhere in Genesis to draw the reader's attention to **people** of special significance, the same principle should be followed here: these words draw the reader's attention to a **place** of special significance. What is that significance of "the heavens and the earth"? The significance seems to be in the fact that God has created a place where he is to be worshiped. Moses is telling the story of the worldwide temple! This is confirmed in many places. See, for instance, Colossians 1:15-20 and Revelation 21-22.

The fact that the same phrase is used with both **people** and a **place** indicates that these two things are, in some sense, connected. They both have storylines and these storylines relate to the same thing. Both are related to worship and the place of worship—God's temple.

Sometimes, a particular "These are the generations" introductory phrase is followed by a list. Other times, however, this introductory phrase is followed by a story. Such is the case here. This particular section concludes at 4:26. In that verse, we see people worshiping God: "At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD". The conclusion to this section serves as further confirmation that the main point of this section is about worship.

The Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation) reads, "This is the book of the genealogy of heaven and earth". It is significant to notice how this Ancient Greek translation (also called the LXX) is worded because Matthew 1:1 begins in the exact same way. Matthew wants his readers to think about this verse when they read about the coming of Jesus. Matthew is hoping his readers see Jesus' coming as the beginning of a new creation.

the LORD God³⁵ made the earth and the heavens.³⁶

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,³⁷ **6** and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— **7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.³⁸ **8** And the LORD God planted³⁹ a

³⁵ Notice the change in the name used for God in these verses. The name God (Elohim) was used in Genesis 1:1-2:3. However, in 2:4-3:24 Moses begins using the name “LORD God” (Yahweh Elohim). Many times in the Old Testament, the name Yahweh is used without being attached to the name Elohim. Here, however, it is important for the names Yahweh and Elohim to be attached. If they had not been attached, the reader may have thought Moses was describing a new and different God in these verses. By attaching Yahweh to Elohim, Moses demonstrates that Yahweh is not a new and different God from the God he was describing in Genesis 1:1-2:3. He is the same God as was described in Genesis 1:1-2:3. The new name, however, demonstrates that God has more aspects to his character than may be described by just one name. This new name, also, sets God apart from other gods.

³⁶ ***** This is the second poem in the Bible. This poem is extremely important and it demands close study. The explanation of this poem is too lengthy to include in this location. See the introduction to this section for a detailed explanation of this poem. The notes connected to this poem are highlighted in red.

³⁷ God did not create his land to be fruitful on its own. God’s good land requires the work of God (he brings the rain) and man (he works the ground). Notice the connection between the people God creates and the place he creates. They are connected to each other. See Psalm 8.

³⁸ Almost identical language is used when Jesus breathes on his disciples after his resurrection from the dead so that they might “receive the Holy Spirit” (see John 20:22). The Apostle John deliberately uses this language because he wants his readers to see that, because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, a new kind of people are being created! Christians are part of the new creation (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). See also 1 Corinthians 15:42-49. The Apostle Paul uses this verse in Genesis to compare Adam with Jesus and to speak about the resurrection body believers will receive. Paul calls Jesus “the last Adam”. He says that in the same way that “we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven”. In this way, Paul proves that believers will receive a resurrection body.

³⁹ As was noted earlier, Genesis 2:4-25 brings the reader close and lets us “watch” God as he works. Here, we see him working with the soil and his “hands getting dirty” as he plants the garden. Yahweh Elohim is intimately connected to this garden.

garden in Eden,⁴⁰ in the east⁴¹ and there he put the man whom he had formed. **9** And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.⁴² The tree of life was in the midst of the garden,⁴³ and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.⁴⁴

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- ⁴⁰ The garden is not Eden. Rather, the garden is a special place within Eden. Therefore, it appears that the garden was, relatively speaking, not especially large at this time. However, as the man and woman obeyed God's command to be fruitful and multiply, the garden would have grown along with them. The garden should have filled the earth as the offspring of Adam and Eve filled the earth. Unfortunately, the first Adam did not accomplish the task that had been given to him. Because of disobedience, Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, is currently accomplishing this task. Because of his obedience, God's fruitful "garden" is expanding to cover the earth! One day, the garden will cover everything. See Revelation 21-22.
- ⁴¹ The fact that Eden is connected with the **east** should remind readers of the tabernacle (the house of God). The east is a direction especially connected with the tabernacle and temple. This is one indication that the tabernacle and temple are small representations of Eden.
- ⁴² Compare this with 3:6. In that verse, Moses notes that Eve saw that the tree was "good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes". However, she also saw something about the tree that God did not intend. She saw that it "is to be desired to make one wise". God did not create the trees to do this. It appears she "learned" this from the serpent. Wisdom for people was not to come from this tree. It was to come from God alone. It is interesting that in Proverbs 3:18, wisdom is connected to the tree of life, not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- ⁴³ The tree of life is in the center of the garden. This fact demonstrates the great significance of this tree. Based on Genesis 3:3, this was also the location of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- ⁴⁴ These two trees will be very significant in determining the lives of all humans. The significance of these trees cannot be seen in the very brief comments made by Moses here. However, his brief focus upon these trees prepares the reader (this is called **foreshadowing**) for what is to happen in Genesis 3 (and in the rest of the Bible). The man and woman eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and, because of this, they are kept from eating from the tree of life. The tree of life is a tree that gives life. This is clearly a good tree. However, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is also good (see Genesis 1:31). Misuse of the tree, however, is evil.

10⁴⁵ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. **11** The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. **12** And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.⁴⁶ **13** The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. **14** And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden

⁴⁵ There are four verses related to a river in this chapter. This is a clue that this river is very significant to the story being told by Moses (and in the story of the Bible). While it is not clear where the river was in the garden, in the text itself it is located next to the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They are “located” just one verse apart! Thus, the river and the tree of life are, in some way, meant to be seen as close to one another. To put it another way, **the tree of life and the river go together**. They are both in the center of the garden. It is significant that later authors in the Bible speak of a tree planted by a river (or streams) of water (see Psalm 1:4, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Revelation 22:1-2). These passages are all connected to each other and to these verses in Genesis 2. Jesus, too, seems to refer to this passage (and Ezekiel 47:9) when he speaks of rivers of living water flowing from within the person who believes in him (see John 7:38). According to the Apostle John, Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life is like the river described in Genesis 2 (and Psalm 1, Ezekiel 47, and Revelation 22). The Holy Spirit flowing from within the believer brings life to a thirsty world.

The river starts in the garden, but it doesn’t stay in the garden. It separates and flows in four directions from the garden into the rest of the world. It is as if the garden’s goodness isn’t intended for just the garden. It “wants” to spill over to other places. This should have been a great encouragement to Adam and Eve. They had everything they needed if the garden was to expand beyond its current boundaries! This is also true of believers today. Because of the Holy Spirit, we have everything we need to boldly go into all the world. See Acts 1:8.

⁴⁶ Moses never tells the readers why they need to know about the gold and precious stones in Havilah. It certainly is not so that the readers might go to Havilah and try to find the gold! Moses wants his readers to focus on the garden in Eden and worship of God, not on foreign lands and worship of gold. But, at the same time, he clearly wants his readers to know about the gold and precious stones in Havilah! The significance may be in the fact that this is one more obvious connection between the garden in Eden and the temple (the river, remember, is connected to the temple in Ezekiel 47). Gold and precious stones were a significant part of the tabernacle, the temple, the furniture used in them, and the garments of the priests. And gold and precious stones will be abundant in the new Jerusalem (see Revelation 21). It is perhaps significant that the gold and precious stones are **outside** of Eden, but in Revelation 21, the gold and precious stones are **inside** of the city-garden. This may be an indication that the garden in Eden needed to expand to include all that was good and precious, but that the garden-city in Revelation is fully expanded. It includes all that is good and precious. Christ is the one who has accomplished this!

to work it and keep it.⁴⁷ **16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,⁴⁸ **17** but of

⁴⁷ The health of the garden depends on the work, goodness, and favor of God. It also depends on the obedience, faithfulness, and courage of the man. He has been given several important jobs to do in the garden. He is to “work” the garden so that it might flourish and he is to “keep” the garden so that it might not be defiled. In this way, he would be protecting all of those living within the garden. The word translated “**keep**” in Genesis 2:15 is also used in Genesis 3:24 in regard to the cherubim who were placed at the entrance to the garden “to **guard** the way to the tree of life”. In other words, it is Adam’s job to **guard** the garden. He is to **keep** it pure. It is significant to note that the word translated “**keep**” in 2:15 is later used of priests in the temple (see, for instance, Numbers 3:10 and 3:38). Moses and Aaron and his sons were supposed to be “**guarding** the sanctuary itself, to protect the people of Israel. And any outsider who came near was to be put to death”. As we have already seen, there are many parallels between the temple and the garden in Eden. In the same way that the priests were to guard the temple from “outsiders”, Adam was to protect the garden from “outsiders”. However, in Genesis 3, we read of an outsider (the serpent) coming into the garden. Based on the instructions to priests in Numbers, it is clear that Adam should have tried to kill the serpent, for the serpent was advocating rebellion against God. By doing this, he would have been **keeping** the garden. Adam did not do this. Instead of **keeping** the garden, he allowed the serpent to **work** in the garden! Adam failed in his priestly role of **guarding** the garden. The last Adam, the Lord Jesus, has not failed in this task. Instead, he went to battle with Satan and defeated him. Jesus is currently **working** and **keeping** God’s garden (the church)! And we are to work with him, for the task is not complete. Satan has been defeated by Christ, but he is still very dangerous. He is like a serpent with a mortal wound that is still thrashing about (see Revelation 12). Christians share in the victory of Christ, and we also share in the task of **working** and **keeping** God’s place. Neither one of these two tasks can be neglected. Men and women in local churches need to **work** and to **keep** the area that they have been entrusted with by God. In regard to **keeping** the local church, elders in the church play a very important role. If they are not willing to guard God’s church, they should not serve as elders. See the Apostle Paul’s words to the elders in Acts 20:17-38.

⁴⁸ God is not limiting mankind in any way. He is very generous. In Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve, however, he tries to cause them to doubt God’s goodness and generosity (see Genesis 3:1). He wants them to believe that God is holding something good back from them.

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,⁴⁹ for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”⁵⁰

18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be

⁴⁹ The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not an evil tree. It, like the rest of God’s creation, was “very good” (see Genesis 1:31). Misuse of the tree, however, was evil. Unlike every other tree in the garden, God did not permit Adam to eat the fruit of this tree. This tree’s “gift” of the knowledge of good and evil (represented by the fruit) was to remain external to Adam. In other words, “the knowledge of good and evil” was not to reside inside of Adam. It was, however, something that did reside inside of God (see God’s words in Genesis 3:22)! It seems, based on the way the words “good and evil” are used in 2 Samuel 14:17, that the “knowledge of good and evil” is another way of saying “**determining** good and evil”. If this is the case, it is about rendering judgment. In other words, if Adam was to eat the fruit of this tree, it would be symbolic of him taking the power of judgment away from God and, instead, like a god, beginning to decide for himself what was right or wrong. In this way, the fruit of the tree gave “god-like” power to those who ate its fruit. That is how people who ate it were “like God” (Genesis 3:22). Adam was not to eat the fruit. He (along with Eve and all of their descendants) was to live his life joyfully rejecting this god-like power. Adam and everyone to follow after him, were, instead, to forever trust in God’s good judgments. It is significant that Christ, the last Adam, has been given all judgment by God (see John 5:22-27)!

The command is given to Adam alone in 2:16-17. This is evident because, in the Hebrew text, the three uses of “you” in these verses are singular (interestingly, the ancient Greek translates verse 17 using the plural form of you). However, at some point in time after her creation, Adam repeated the command to Eve and he told her that she, too, needed to obey this command. This is clear because, when Eve repeats this command in 3:3, she uses the plural form of “you”. Eve’s words in Genesis 3 are evidence that Adam told her the command he had received from God and he understood that commands given to him were to apply to his wife and to their offspring as well.

It is appropriate that the commands were spoken to Adam alone, because his obedience (or disobedience) would impact all people. In the same way, the obedience of the last Adam (Jesus) impacts all people. See Romans 5:12-21.

⁵⁰ While the gold and precious stones described in 2:11-12 are precious, a more precious thing in this chapter is God’s good word to mankind (see Psalm 19:9-11). Gold cannot keep one alive. God’s word, however, does. God’s words here are not a sign of cruelty. They are a gracious gift promising life to Adam and Eve. In regard to sin bringing death, see Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:1-3.

alone;⁵¹ I will make⁵² him a helper⁵³ fit for him.”⁵⁴ **19** Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he

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- 51** Seven times in 1:1-2:3, God declared that something was good. This is the first time God says that something is not good. One reason it is not good for man to be alone is because man is made in the image of the triune God (see Genesis 1:26-28). This means man is created for fellowship. A second reason it is not good to be alone may be found in the task Adam was given. It is too much for him to bear alone. That is why God said, “I will make him a **helper** fit for him”. Man needs help to complete the task he has been given. It is not good if he does not have help in this work.
- 52** The Septuagint (again, an ancient Greek translation sometimes called the LXX) reads, “We will make”. This connects God’s words here to 1:26-28.
- 53** The word **helper** does not mean one who is inferior. It is significant to note that the same word (or related forms of the same word) is also used by God to describe his relationship with Israel (see Genesis 49:25, Exodus 18:4, Deuteronomy 33:29, 1 Samuel 7:12, Isaiah 41:10, 41:13, 44:2, 49:8, 50:7, and 50:9). In the same way that God is not inferior to Israel, so the wife is not inferior to the husband. Rather, she is bringing strong assistance that is required in order for the man to successfully complete a task.
- 54** The idea of a helper is very important. This is clear because it is repeated in verse 20. By definition, a helper is not given a different task from the person he or she is helping. Rather, the helper helps with the same task. Again, why is the lack of a helper for the man “not good”? There are at least two reasons. **First**, this is an indication that the man needed fellowship. He was not created to be alone. As creatures created in the image of the triune God, fellowship with similar creatures is a need and a joy of all people. **Second**, it is because the task would be too difficult for the man without help. Note that the helper God will make for the man is described as “fit for him”. The Hebrew (sometimes called the MT) reads something like, “in front of him” or “opposite him”. The idea seems to be of someone who “takes their stand” in a different place from the one being helped and, therefore, brings different gifts and abilities so that the task may be successfully completed. This is truly a great and important gift!

would call them.⁵⁵ And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.⁵⁶ **21** So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.⁵⁷ **22** And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her

⁵⁵ The verses about God creating and bringing the animals to the man are embedded within the story of God making a helper for the man (2:18-25). The animals are not the main point of this particular passage. The main point, throughout this entire passage, is the helper. This is evident because the passage begins with a description of the helper (2:18) and it ends with a description of the helper (2:20-25). These two bookends focusing on the helper (this is called, in literary terms, an **envelope**) demonstrate that the entire passage is about the man's helper. The animals are, in a sense, supporting actors, whose "performance" is meant to draw even more attention to the main character in the drama—the helper. The long description of the animals being brought to the man delays the arrival of the helper. We, as the readers, are forced to wait along with Adam for the truly special helper that God has planned for Adam. We consider each animal along with Adam. We marvel at their uniqueness. But, like Adam, we reject them as helpers because they cannot be the helper described in verse 18. The animals in all their greatness draw much more attention to the surpassing greatness of the helper. The man needs something "fit for him". Even though the animals are great and unique, they are not "fit for him". They are not made in God's image.

Mankind is allowed to name the animals. This is a demonstration of God graciously sharing his rulership of the earth with mankind. He is, again, very generous. It is significant that Jesus, called the last Adam in the New Testament, also named things (see, for instance, John 1:42).

⁵⁶ Animals, even today, are a reminder of the great task that has been given to humans. When we consider the animals, we can also consider that they cannot help us complete the task we have been given. They are a reminder that we need to treasure marriage and that God has given people a task that must be completed. It is not the animals' responsibility to complete this task.

⁵⁷ The Apostle Paul uses this passage to speak about how men and women are to relate in marriage and to speak about the relationship between Christ and the church (see Ephesians 5:22-33). Obviously, this passage in Genesis never specifically mentions Christ or the church. However, it does speak about God's intent for marriage. The man needs a helper in order to complete his task! The first Adam had his bride—Eve. Their marriage is described in Genesis 2. Christ, as the last Adam, also has his bride—the church. Their marriage is described in many, many passages. In the same way that Adam in Genesis 2 was "put to sleep" and the woman was taken out of him, so Christ was "put to sleep" (i.e., "died") and the church was taken out of him. In the same way that Eve was to be diligent in her role as Adam's helper, the church, as Christ's bride, must be diligent in its role as his helper.

to the man.⁵⁸ **23** Then the man said,
 “This⁵⁹ at last is bone of my bones
 and flesh of my flesh;
 she shall be called Woman,

⁵⁸ The Apostle Paul places great significance on the fact that “Adam was formed first, then Eve” (1 Timothy 2:13). According to Paul, this fact has ongoing significance in the church. The order of creation is one of the reasons why Paul says, “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet” (1 Timothy 2:11-12). His very next words are, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve”. Thus, Paul’s understanding of how churches are to arrange themselves is drawn from these verses in Genesis! It is important to understand that the order of creation (and, thus, the order that is to be reflected in the church) is not something that happened after Adam and Eve sinned. Rather, it happened before they sinned! This means God’s order in creation is not something to be despised or hated. Instead, like all of his good gifts, it is to be embraced.

⁵⁹ While it is not apparent in the ESV, the word “this” is used throughout the poem (the ESV only uses one “this” and even in that use of “this” it is not used in the way it is used in the Hebrew). “This” is the first word in the poem, “this” is the first word of the third verset, and “this” is the last word of the poem. Here is a rough translation of the Hebrew.

*“This time, bone from my bones
 and flesh from my flesh.
 This one will be called woman
 because from man she was taken—this one.”*

It is as if Adam is standing by the woman and saying, “Finally! After all those other times when animals were brought before me and I could not find one suited to help me, **this time** I have been given a helper fit for me! **This one** will be called woman, because **this one** was taken from man!” The word **this** serves three different purposes in this poem. First, it serves as a comparison between different times: “This time” (as opposed to those other times). Second, it serves to designate which of the creatures will be called woman (“this one will be called woman”). Third, it serves to explain why she will be named woman—because “this one was taken from man” (as opposed to those animals who were not taken from man).

because she was taken out of Man.”⁶⁰

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold

⁶⁰ This poem is the first speech recorded by a human in the scriptures. While his audience isn't named, it seems clear that Adam is speaking to God. This appears to be the case because Adam refers to the woman as “this one”. She is the one Adam is talking about. She is not the one he is talking to. These words are, in a sense, Adam's wedding vows to God! He explicitly says that this one (later to be named Eve) is one with him. His words imply that he is committing before God to do all that is necessary to be one flesh with her.

In this poem, notice how the first statement (“bone from my bones”) is echoed by the second statement (“flesh from my flesh”). This, again, is called parallelism. Parallelism is typical in Hebrew poetry. In Hebrew poetry the second statement (sometimes called a *verset* by scholars) usually does more than just echo the first statement (again, *verset*). It also strengthens, intensifies, or adds to the first statement in some way. What has been added in the second *verset* of Genesis 2:23? First, in the progression from “bone of my bones” to “flesh of my flesh”, there's an obvious progression from inward skeletal structure to outer skin. But is that all the progression we see here? It's difficult to know for sure. Poetry is more difficult to fully explain than prose. But that's part of the beauty of poetry. The poetic structure forces the reader to stop and think about what is being said. In these *versets*, the poet (Adam) has moved from the impersonal skeletal structure of his wife (bones) to talking about something more personal about her—her skin (flesh). Bones are hard. Flesh, however, is soft and pliable. It is not the bones that we find attractive in another person but the flesh. We don't identify with the bones of another person but we identify with their flesh. There is probably more being said here (could Adam, for instance, be hinting at his attraction to her emotional makeup in the second *verset*?), but it is enough to note that there is definitely some level of progression or intensification between the two *versets*.

While this poem is a celebration of the woman, it also relates to animals, because they are the thing Eve is being compared to. She is the “this” in the poem. Even though they are not named in the poem, they are the “that” Eve is being compared to. Animals should remind us of the help we have been given. When we see a creature, we should certainly celebrate that they are created by God, but we should also celebrate that we have been given help that is far greater!

fast to his wife,⁶¹ and they shall become one flesh.⁶² **25** And the man and his wife⁶³ were both naked⁶⁴ and were not ashamed.⁶⁵

⁶¹ The word translated “hold fast” is also used to describe how God’s people are to relate to him (see, for instance, Deuteronomy 4:4, 10:20, 11:22, 13:4, and 30:20).

⁶² In this verse, Moses briefly stops narrating the story so that he can teach his readers about marriage. This is the first instruction explicitly directed toward people other than Adam and Eve in the Bible! It is important to note that Moses writes these words to instruct people who are living after **the Fall** (the Fall is a way scholars refer to the sin of Adam and Eve that led to worldwide sin and death). By these words, Moses indicates that, even though mankind has sinned and has been driven from the garden in Eden, marriage has lost none of the significance it had before the Fall! This shows that the blessing given to Adam in giving him a helper is perpetuated in every marriage between a man and a woman. The wife is a gift to the husband so that they might, together as one flesh, fulfill the mandate given to mankind to fill the earth with God’s image. The fact that marriage still has the same meaning also means that mankind still needs to fulfill the original task given in Genesis 1:26-28.

An understanding of this passage is of massive importance. These verses are used as a basis for Christian thought in several critical areas. First, this passage is used by Jesus to explain how God’s people ought to think about marriage and divorce (see Matthew 19:3-12 and Mark 10:2-12). Second, this passage is used by Paul to provide Christians with guidelines so that they might understand proper and improper sexual conduct (see 1 Corinthians 6:12-20). Third, this passage is used by Paul to provide husbands and wives with an understanding of how they are to relate to one another in marriage (see Ephesians 5:22-33). Fourth, this passage is used by Paul to provide the church with an understanding of how the church is to be structured (see 1 Timothy 2:11-15).

⁶³ It seems strange that the woman is not named in this chapter. This is, after all, a naming chapter (Adam names all the animals)! Yet the woman’s name is “withheld” until chapter 3. The reason her name is withheld until later is made clear when she is named.

⁶⁴ See the note regarding the word translated “crafty” in 3:3.

⁶⁵ This is an example of foreshadowing. The next chapter will focus on the **shame** of Adam and Eve regarding their **nakedness**. This verse prepares the reader for the events that will take place in chapter 3.

Genesis 3

Genesis 3 is a major turning point in the story of creation and in the story of the world. In this chapter, the reader is introduced to the serpent and is able to hear him distort God's good words and God's good creation. This serpent will play a major role in the story being told in the rest of scripture. It is as if the reader has been brought into the scene and is listening to Eve (Adam's perfect helper!) as she talks with the serpent. The reader wonders why Adam doesn't say a word. Next, the reader watches, in horror, as Adam and Eve disobey God's good command and eat the fruit. Instantly, everything changes. Adam and Eve begin creating things (their own clothes). They hide from God. And God, as the eternal Judge, pronounces heaven's verdicts upon Adam, Eve, and the serpent.

In this chapter, the reader only "sees" two people—Adam and Eve. However, there is another person who is also described in this chapter. This person, like Adam and Eve, will also have a close encounter with the serpent. This person, unlike Adam and Eve, will not listen to the serpent's lies. He will defeat the serpent. This person is introduced in a poem. Notice the words in bold below.

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and **her offspring**;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."* **Genesis 3:15**

Who is this future serpent bruising warrior? In this chapter, this future warrior who is to battle the serpent is referred to as the woman's **offspring**. Later passages in the Old Testament describe this offspring more completely. In fact, the word **offspring** is used in many significant passages. The prophets who wrote in the Old Testament were anxiously waiting for the coming of this **offspring**. When would the serpent be defeated? Readers of the New Testament know that the "offspring" first described in Genesis 3:15 has already come. His name is Jesus. While Jesus has already defeated the serpent (i.e., Satan), Satan's destruction will not be fully seen until the events described in Revelation 20:10 take place. Until that day, believers in the Lord Jesus will still suffer because of Satan.

Genesis 3⁶⁶

1 Now the serpent⁶⁷ was more crafty⁶⁸ than any other beast of the

⁶⁶ Adam is noticeably absent in the first five and a half verses of this chapter. Given God's earlier words about Adam and his role in **working** and **keeping** the garden, it is very surprising that he is absent. This immediately tells the reader that something has gone terribly wrong. Based on the previous chapter, the reader should be expecting Adam to speak and to take action when the serpent begins questioning Eve. Beyond this, based on the previous chapter, the reader should be expecting Eve to look to Adam for help! They are supposed to be one flesh! Instead, the reader watches Eve wrestle with the lies of the serpent alone as Adam stands quietly by her side doing nothing. Based on God's commands to Adam, the reader is expecting Adam to confront the serpent, to protect his wife, and to protect the garden. He does none of these things. The world is still paying the price for Adam's cowardly disobedience.

⁶⁷ This serpent is more than just an ordinary snake. That is one reason why the word "the" appears before the word "serpent". The word "the" demonstrates that Moses is referring to one particular serpent. As later passages in the Bible make clear, this serpent is **Satan** (or the devil)—an evil spiritual being of tremendous power (see, for instance, Revelation 12:9). Satan means "the adversary". Jesus describes Satan as "a murderer from the beginning" and "a liar and the father of lies" (see John 8:44). But while the serpent is clearly Satan, he is not called Satan in this passage. The reader encounters Satan in the same way that Adam and Eve encountered him—as a serpent. He doesn't appear to be a dangerous adversary. Rather, he acts as if he is a friend trying to help Eve. Satan doesn't outwardly proclaim his hatred toward God and God's good words. Instead, he "corrects" things that God has said. The manner in which Satan appeared to Adam and Eve is similar to how he "appears" to all people. He lies about God's words and about his goodness. Based on its words, Adam and Eve should have recognized that the serpent was an adversary. They should have recognized that he did not love God's good words and, therefore, that he did not treasure obedience to God's good words. These things are still true of Satan today.

The reader meets the serpent in the third chapter of the Bible. He isn't destroyed until the end of the Bible. Between the beginning of the Bible and the end of the Bible, the serpent changes its appearance. By the end of the Bible, he "has grown" into a terrible dragon. This explains why certain psalms speak of God conquering the "sea monster" (sometimes biblical poetry uses the name "Rahab" as a reference to this terrible sea monster).

⁶⁸ The word "naked" in 2:25 and the word "crafty" in 3:1 are very similar in the Hebrew. This seems to be intentional. This provides a link between the innocence of Adam and Eve and the evil craftiness of the serpent. Adam and Eve are vulnerable to the craftiness of Satan. His desire is that people might be clothed in shame. Jesus' desire is that people might be clothed like priests and kings (see Psalm 110:3, Isaiah 61:10, Revelation 3:5, 4:4, 7:9, and 7:13).

field that the LORD God had made.⁶⁹

He said⁷⁰ to the woman,⁷¹ “Did God⁷² actually say, ‘You⁷³ shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”⁷⁴ **2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, **3** but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the

⁶⁹ One implication of these words is that **God made the serpent**. Thus, the serpent is not eternal and he is not equal with God. Since this is the case, and everything was good when it was created, there must have been a time when the serpent was good. This means there was a **fall** of the serpent. When, exactly, did this happen? What were the events that led to Satan’s fall? It is significant to note that Moses is not interested in telling the reader that story at this time. He is telling the story of people and their fall, not the story of the serpent and its fall. It helps the preacher or teacher to be concerned about the things the author is concerned about. To put it another way, if the author doesn’t care about a particular subject, the reader shouldn’t care, either. These “hidden stories” may be interesting, but they are not the main point of the passage. Another example of this is Moses’s reference to the Nephilim in Genesis 6:4. These “mighty men who were of old” are interesting, but they are not the point of the passage. If they were the main point, we would have been told more about them. Moses is telling his readers something far more important. It is the joy and obligation of the preacher to discover the important messages of each passage and to proclaim those things.

⁷⁰ Satan’s way of talking to the woman is typical of how he “speaks” to all people. He always speaks lies (again, see John 8:44). In order to stand firm in the face of such temptation, the Christian must **know** God’s good words, **remember** those words, when temptation comes and **resist** Satan. See James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8-9.

⁷¹ It is significant that the serpent speaks to Eve rather than to Adam. It is as if he is trying to undermine God’s order in creation. Adam, remember, was created first and Eve was created to be his helper. The serpent’s manner of avoiding God’s order of authority should be a clue to the reader that the serpent has evil intentions. This is typical of Satan. He delights in upsetting God’s good order.

⁷² Satan does not use God’s covenant name (Yahweh Elohim) when he speaks to the woman. Instead, he uses the more general name of God (Elohim). This is a clue to the reader that the serpent is not a covenant “friend” of God. By using the more general name of God and not his personal name, he speaks about God in such a way as to keep the woman at an emotional distance from God. This is how Satan deceives people. He hates God’s covenant with people and will always do what he can to distance people from it. It is significant that in the woman’s answer, she refers to God in this same way. Because of Satan’s confusing speech, God has been, in a sense, placed at a distance from the people!

⁷³ The “you” used in this verse (and in the following verses) is plural. Satan may be talking to the woman, but he is speaking about both Eve and Adam.

⁷⁴ The LXX (an ancient Greek translation of the original Hebrew) reads “Why did God say, ‘You may not eat from every tree in the garden?’”.

garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”⁷⁵ **4** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”⁷⁶ **5** For God knows⁷⁷ that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,⁷⁸ knowing good and evil.”⁷⁹ **6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and

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- 75** The woman quotes Yahweh, but her quotation of his words is not accurate. **Yahweh did not say that Adam and Eve couldn't touch the tree.** He only said they couldn't eat from the tree. She is making God's laws more strict than they actually were. Her lack of clarity regarding God's actual command made her vulnerable to deception by Satan. This is exactly what happened. She was deceived by Satan (see 1 Timothy 2:14). Eve is deceived even though she seems to know the majority of what God said. This is a warning to all who are careless in knowing God's word. It is also a warning against making God's laws more strict than they actually are.
- 76** The serpent's answer is as emphatic as God's original command was. He strongly insists that she will not die. He sets himself up as an authority who is equal — or greater than — God!
- 77** According to God, he gave Adam and Eve this command so that they might not die. It was motivated by God's love and it was for their good. According to Satan, however, God had a very different reason motivating this command. It was because God is selfish and he doesn't want others to be like him. Satan still does this. He calls God's character into question.
- 78** The LXX reads “you will be like gods” (plural).
- 79** By this point, Adam should have recognized that the serpent was an enemy and should have gone to battle against the serpent. He had been commanded to “keep” the garden. In the same way that the priests would later be commanded to keep evil from the tabernacle (and later the temple), Adam was to keep evil from the garden. Instead, Adam allowed his wife to be deceived. The last Adam (Jesus) did not do this and he does not do this. He battled Satan so that his bride (the church) might never be deceived.

Satan is a liar. However, like all liars, his words have a small amount of truth in them. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they did become like gods—at least in a particular way. By abandoning the judgment of the true God, they assumed the right to make decisions regarding right and wrong for themselves. In this way they became, in essence, their own gods. Adam and his wife had never done this before. They had relied on God's judgment to guide them. The reader has already read of God making judgments in 1:4, 1:10, 1:12, 1:18, 1:21, 1:25, and 1:31. In all of those verses, God makes a determination that a thing is **good**. A thing is good because he has declared it to be good. He is its judge. Determining what is good and what is evil is a right that belongs to God alone. This should be clear from Genesis 1 and 2. The serpent knew Adam and his wife had not been given this right. **The uneaten fruit on the tree was to stand as a testimony that God had reserved judgment for himself.** But Adam wanted the tree's power within himself! Adam's rebellion is still seen in humans today. One of the results of sin is that people do not respect God's judgments. Instead, acting like little gods, people make judgments themselves. People call things which God has declared to be evil “good” and things which God has declared to be good “evil”.

that the tree was to be desired to make one wise,⁸⁰ she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her,⁸¹ and he ate.⁸² **7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.⁸³ And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.⁸⁴

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden

⁸⁰ This verse describes three reasons why the woman felt that it was right to disobey God and to eat the fruit. The first two of Eve's reasons are an echo from Genesis 2:9: the tree was a delight to the eyes and it was good for food. But while the fruit may have been good, it wouldn't have been good food for her. It would kill her. And Eve's final reason she learned from Satan. She believed, based on his deception, that eating from the tree would make her wise. But eating forbidden fruit doesn't make one wise. It demonstrates that you are a fool. The fear of God and the hearing and keeping of his good words (his commands) makes one wise. The three reasons that convinced Eve to eat the fruit are very similar to the "desires" spoken of in 1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world". All people need to be wary of our tendency to invent reasons why disobedience to God is acceptable.

Eve's story is repeated by different characters and in different ways throughout the Bible. For instance, in the story of the Israelites conquering Jericho when they first entered the Promised Land (see Joshua 7:18-24), God told the Israelites they could not take the plunder (treasure) for themselves. A man named Achan, however, "**saw** among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then [he] **coveted** them and **took** them". Achan's sin led to punishment for all the Israelites. Fortunately, there is one who, unlike Eve and Achan, passed the test. Jesus was also tempted by Satan (see Matthew 4:1-11). He conquered Satan by regarding God's good words as better treasure than Satan's lies.

⁸¹ Adam was passively standing by his wife. Again, he should have, as the one commanded to **keep** the garden, gone to battle with the snake and cast it from the garden. In the same way that God "conquered" the physical darkness (i.e., "the earth was without form and void") that made the earth uninhabitable (see Genesis 1:2), Adam should have conquered the spiritual darkness that would have made the garden uninhabitable.

⁸² In 1 Timothy 2:14, Paul declares that "Adam was not deceived". This means Adam knowingly **rebelled** against God!

⁸³ Adam and Eve expected that their eyes would be opened and they would become wise. Instead, their eyes were opened and they saw their nakedness. Because of the "craftiness" of Satan (3:1), the "nakedness" of Adam and Eve was exposed (2:25).

⁸⁴ This is the first thing people make in world history. As readers we have come to expect God to make things. Thus, if Adam and Eve were to be clothed, it would seem appropriate for God to have made their clothes and to give them their clothes. Here, however, Adam and Eve attempt to cover their shame themselves. Their clothing does not hide their sin.

in the cool of the day,⁸⁵ and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God⁸⁶ among the trees of the garden. **9**⁸⁷ But the LORD God called to the man⁸⁸ and said to him, “Where are you?”⁸⁹ **10** And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid,⁹⁰ because I was naked, and I hid myself.”⁹¹ **11**⁹² He said, “Who told you that you were naked?⁹³ Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”⁹⁴ **12** The man said, “The

⁸⁵ The Hebrew does not say, “in the cool of the day”. Rather, it reads, “in the wind of the day” (the LXX reads, “in the evening”). The Hebrew text may be referring to God walking in the garden during the cooler part of the day. However, it is also possible that the “wind of the day” is a reference to God coming near to Adam and his wife in a storm! If this is the case, this “wind” is not a mere breeze. It is a windstorm, probably accompanied by thunder, lightning, darkness, and rain! The storm is a fitting representative of God’s wrath because of sin. This “storm” interpretation fits well with other parts of scripture where God’s wrath is outwardly displayed. See, for instance, the darkness and earthquake when Jesus was crucified (see Matthew 27:45-56).

⁸⁶ Sin causes people to try to cover their sin by their own methods and to hide from God’s presence. God is gracious and he comes and finds Adam and Eve even though they have sinned against him and want to hide from him. He still does this with sinners today.

⁸⁷ God’s questions in verses 9 and 11 are addressed to Adam alone.

⁸⁸ The man is the leader. Satan did not recognize God’s authority structure. He ignored the man and tempted the woman. God, however, does not alter the authority structure. He first speaks to Adam, because Adam is the one with the ultimate responsibility.

⁸⁹ God is not confused. He knows all things. He asks the question because he wants to hear Adam’s answer. God’s question also allows the reader to hear Adam’s answer.

“Where are you?” is addressed to Adam alone. This is clear because the word “you” is singular in the Hebrew (MT) and in the Greek (LXX). This is additional evidence that God considers Adam to be the leader and that he is accountable for what has just happened.

⁹⁰ Sin and fear are associated. This was true in Adam’s time. It is also true today.

⁹¹ It is interesting that Adam repeatedly uses the pronoun “**I**” here. If Adam and Eve were one, it would seem he would have said, “**we** were naked”. Sin has separated the man from his wife. This is always the case. Sin not only breaks a person’s relationship with God, it also destroys a person’s relationships with others.

⁹² God’s questions in verse 11 are, as with verse 9, addressed to Adam alone. “You” in this verse is singular in the Hebrew (MT) and in the Greek (LXX). Again, Adam is accountable for what has happened in the garden. His actions have led to the death of all people. In a positive sense, God also considers the last Adam (Jesus) accountable for what he has done! In the same way that Adam’s rebellion led to death for all those who are “in him”, Jesus’ obedience leads to life for all those who are “in him”.

⁹³ God knows the answer to this question as well. God’s questions allow the reader to hear Adam’s answer. They allow us to know what he is thinking.

⁹⁴ This is a reference to God’s command to Adam in Genesis 2:17.

Genesis 3

woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”⁹⁵ **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me,⁹⁶ and I ate.”

14 The LORD God said to the serpent,⁹⁷

“Because you have done this,⁹⁸

cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;

on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat⁹⁹
all the days of your life.

⁹⁵ Adam goes from speaking beautiful and loving poetry in 2:23 to making cruel accusations in these verses. Adam blames God for giving his wife to him! Then he blames his wife for his sin. He does not repent or show any understanding that he has done evil. Adam is defiant in his sin. The contrast between Adam’s two speeches is a perfect picture of the contrast between life as God intended it (2:23) and life as Satan wants it (3:12).

⁹⁶ Eve is telling the truth. She was deceived (see 1 Timothy 2:14). Paul compares Eve being deceived by the serpent to believers being “led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul’s use of the “Eve being deceived” story with the Corinthian church demonstrates how preachers today may use these earlier stories as examples to help Christians in their day-to-day lives.

⁹⁷ The three “characters” on trial here are not equal in God’s sight. The man and the woman are permitted to speak. This is evidence of their great worth in God’s sight. The serpent is not permitted to speak. God does not “dignify” him with a chance to defend himself. Notice, also, that the humans are spoken to first. This is another indication of their great worth in God’s sight. God’s “verdict” is pronounced upon the serpent first. He will be shown no mercy. The humans, however, will be shown great mercy. This mercy can be seen in verse 15 and throughout the rest of scripture.

⁹⁸ This means because you have deceived the woman and led the man to rebel.

⁹⁹ See also Isaiah 65:25. Even in the new heavens and the new earth, there will be a reminder of the terrible role the serpent played in the garden in Eden! At this present time, the belly crawling and dust licking position shared by all snakes serves as a constant reminder of Satan’s position in God’s sight and of his sure doom.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,¹⁰⁰
 and between your offspring and her offspring;¹⁰¹
 he¹⁰² shall bruise your head,¹⁰³

100 These words are spoken to Eve. However, as later passages make clear, “the woman” is more than just a reference to Eve. It is ultimately a prophetic reference to the faithful people of God (both men and women). The faithful people of God are the ones through whom the Christ came (see Revelation 12:1-6). All those who are of God will be hated by Satan. However, the words “I will put enmity between your offspring and her offspring” should fill the reader with hope. This means that God will cause God’s people to hate Satan and his works. This is grace from God! God is giving grace so that we might not be deceived like Eve. God’s people have a supernatural hatred toward Satan and his works!

101 **Offspring can be a plural word** (referring to many offspring) **or a singular word** (referring to one offspring). In this poem, it means both! First, the preacher should see this as singular. The offspring refers to the male offspring of the woman who will “bruise [the serpent’s] head”. This is a reference to Jesus. As the last Adam, it is his responsibility and his glory to battle and to defeat the serpent. Second, the preacher should see the word offspring as plural. Because believers are counted as “in Christ”, followers of Christ are also counted as offspring (see Genesis 15:5, Romans 16:20, and Galatians 3:29)! Again, offspring is singular (Christ), but it is also plural (the people of Christ). This is why Satan hates Jesus and the people of Christ. Regarding Satan’s desire to destroy the singular offspring (Christ) and the plural offspring (Christ’s people), see Revelation 12:1-5 (these verses concern Satan’s hatred of Christ) and Revelation 12:7-17 (these verses concern Satan’s hatred of Christ’s people). Also read Paul’s words in Galatians 3:16 and 29 together with Genesis 13:15, 17:8, and 24:7. See also Isaiah 6:13. This passage in Isaiah is a prophecy about the Christ. The ESV reads, “The holy **seed** is its stump”. The word translated “seed” is the same word as is translated “offspring” in Genesis 3:15. This passage in Isaiah is also referring to the offspring promised in Genesis 3:15!

The offspring of the woman is not the only offspring referred to in this passage. The serpent also has offspring. In the same way that the offspring of the woman is singular (Christ) and plural (those who are in him), the offspring of the serpent should likely be seen as singular and plural. This passage introduces the idea of an **antichrist** (although that word is not used in this passage). This God-hating and Christ-denying offspring of the serpent is noted for extreme hatred of the offspring of the woman. As may be seen in 1 John 2:18-25, this word can be singular (as in “**the** antichrist”), and it can be plural (as in “**many** antichrists”). See also also 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Revelation 13:1-10. Until the time of the end, the offspring of the woman (Christ and those who are in him) and the offspring of the serpent (antichrist—whether singular or plural) will be doing battle. The offspring of the woman will triumph (see Revelation 20:7-10).

102 The “he” here is a reference to the Christ. He is the male offspring from the woman who will “bruise” the head of the serpent. However, it is also a reference to all those who are in him.

103 This is a reference to Christ crushing Satan. However, because believers are “in Christ”, we, like Christ, are also used by God to crush Satan. This is why the Apostle Paul is able to speak as he does in Romans 16:20!

and you shall bruise his heel.”¹⁰⁴

16 To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children.”¹⁰⁵

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ A bite on a heel from a poisonous snake is deadly. Thus, the fact that the “offspring” of the woman will be “bruised” on the heel should not be taken lightly. This is a deadly wound! The offspring of the woman (Jesus) will suffer greatly when he goes to battle with the serpent. But he does what Adam would not do. He battles with the serpent so that he might destroy it so that God’s word might be honored and that God’s people might live in God’s place without fear. This is the story of the gospel! Jesus died so that Satan might be destroyed and so that people might be freed from the power of the devil (see, for instance, Acts 10:38). Jesus is no longer dead. He has been raised from the dead. God’s people, like Jesus, will also suffer greatly because of the serpent. All those who are in Christ will experience “bruised heels” because of Satan. All those in Christ, however, will be part of bruising his head! See, again, Romans 16:20 and Revelation 12.

¹⁰⁵ In one sense, this is a reference to normal birth pains that accompany every birth. The physical birth pains experienced by every woman giving birth serve as a reminder of the pain associated with the greatest birth—Christ’s birth! This, however, is not the only way to see this reference to birth pains. In the context of this poem, the birth pains are a reference to the tremendous pain that all of God’s people would pay in the struggle to bring forth the “offspring” who was to destroy the serpent. Many, many people died in their struggle to see the birth of the Christ. In this sense, all of the saints in the Old Testament time period can be counted as the “woman” who was “struggling with labor pains”. When connected to verse 15, we see that the offspring who will crush the serpent will be born at great cost to the people of God. See, again, Revelation 12. The “birth pains” are still being experienced by God’s people as they struggle to bring forth “offspring”!

¹⁰⁶ “Your desire shall be **contrary to** your husband” is from the 2017 text edition of the ESV. The previous text edition read, “Your desire shall be **for** your husband”. The ESV’s choice of words in the 2017 text edition is intended, it seems, to more clearly show that the woman’s desire for her husband will not be positive. Thus, the 2017 text edition says that her desire will be **contrary to [her] husband**. This negative kind of “desire” is seen in Genesis 4:7 as well. In that verse, sin is desiring Cain. In that verse, sin desires to rule over Cain. The same would seem to apply here. The idea seems to be that Eve’s desire will be, because of sin, to rule over her husband. In other words, there will be a complete change from God’s order of creation! She will desire her husband’s position of authority. Instead of being his helper, she will now desire his position of leadership. Thus, sin will cause the woman to relate to the man in a way that was not intended at first. The New Living Translation reflects this very well: “And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you”. This doesn’t just affect Eve’s marriage to Adam. This spills over to impact all marriages. Sin has greatly damaged marriage!

but he shall rule over you.”¹⁰⁷

17 And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife¹⁰⁸

and have eaten of the tree

of which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you;¹⁰⁹

in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

18

thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.¹¹⁰

19

By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread,

till you return to the ground,¹¹¹

for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Because of sin, the man will relate to the woman in a way that was not intended at first. He will not treat her as a gift from God and as an equal partner in the work God has given to them. Instead, sin will cause him to become domineering in his leadership. This change in the intended order of things doesn't just affect Adam's marriage to Eve. It spills over to impact all marriages. Again, sin has greatly damaged marriage!

¹⁰⁸ Adam listened to his wife instead of listening to God.

¹⁰⁹ See Romans 8:20-22.

¹¹⁰ Before he sinned, gardening was to be easy for Adam. Now, the ground would not be working for Adam. It would, in a sense, be fighting back. The curse being experienced by all of creation (including the land itself!) will be fully lifted at Christ's second coming. See Romans 8 for Paul's explanation of how the Christian's official "adoption" as sons at Christ's second coming relates to creation itself being transformed.

¹¹¹ This is a poetic way of saying, "Your body will go back to the ground from which it was taken. It will, contrary to what was originally intended, decay".

¹¹² If Adam had remembered that he came from dust, he would have had a proper humility that took God's word seriously and Adam and Eve would not have returned to dust. He forgot that he was a dependent creature. Adam's earthly nature is emphasized here. Instead of being a king and a priest, he is now just a tenant farmer.

20 The man called his wife's name Eve,¹¹³ because she was the mother of all living.¹¹⁴ **21** And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.¹¹⁵

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.¹¹⁶ Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the

113 At first glance, the naming of Eve seems to be out of place. The naming of creatures took place in chapter 2. And that was just before Adam was introduced to Eve. Beyond this, at that time, Adam had not sinned. It would seem that Eve should have received her name at that time. However, Eve isn't named at that time. She isn't named until chapter 3. It is amazing that Adam, even after sinning, is still allowed to name God's creation! This is an example of grace! Beyond this, the fact that Eve is given a glorious name—"the mother of all living"—even after she has been deceived shows grace in her life. Clearly, even though they have sinned, God has not removed his love of people or their purpose.

114 Eve's name is a statement of faith from Adam. After hearing Yahweh's words to himself, to his wife, and to the serpent, Adam grabs hold of the one hopeful thing he has heard. He has heard about an offspring who will destroy the serpent. And he knows that this offspring will come from Eve! Even though death came because of sin, he knows that life will come through the offspring of Eve—she will be "the mother of all living"! Eve's name is Adam's faith in the gospel in seed form. Even though they ate the fruit and died, Adam knows Eve is the mother of the living.

Eve's name should give hope to all of God's people. Because of the male offspring of the woman (Jesus!) life will come to all people who place their faith in him.

115 The reader needs to remember that Adam and Eve already are clothed (see 3:7). However, God graciously gives them new garments. It is very significant to note that God clothes Adam and Eve with **garments made of animal skins**. Something had to die in order for them to be clothed! This is a picture of the gospel story. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. See Isaiah 1:18 and John 1:29.

116 This verse is more evidence that "knowing good and evil" is a reference to the ability to decide for oneself what is right and what is wrong. Adam was "like" God in that he was now making determinations about good and evil himself. This would result in him making another disastrous decision. This seems to be why God drives Adam and Eve out of the garden. He knows that Adam and Eve would, left to themselves, eat from the tree of life and, thus, live forever in rebellion. God protects them from their rebellion!

117 God driving Adam and Eve from the garden is not an example of cruelty. It is an example of mercy. Again, if God permitted Adam and Eve to stay in the garden, they would, because of their new rebellious nature, be tempted to eat from the tree of life (before it was time to do so) and would lock themselves in a permanent state of brokenness and rebellion. Being driven from the garden is an example of God's grace.

ground from which he was taken.¹¹⁸ **24** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Notice how the story of Adam and Eve living inside of the garden is ended here. Statements from the beginning of the “in the garden” story (“like one of us” and “taken from the ground”) are repeated here at the end. This “envelope” of repeated statements is a literary clue that this particular part of the story is over. Adam and Eve are now outside of the garden. A new story is beginning. This new story is the story of mankind’s rebellion against God and the struggle to bring forth the offspring who will make a way for people to, once again, freely enter God’s good place.

¹¹⁹ Cherubim are now guarding the garden. They, at least temporarily, have been given Adam’s job of guarding the garden. It is significant to note that cherubim are sown into the curtain of the tabernacle (and temple). Thus, even in the tabernacle, cherubim are still guarding the Most Holy Place. At Jesus’ death, the curtain of the temple is torn in two (see Mark 15:38). This is symbolic that people, because of the death of Jesus, have been granted access to God’s good place once again. No longer are cherubim guarding the way to God’s presence!

Genesis 4

In Genesis 2 and 3, Adam and Eve were living inside of the garden in Eden. Genesis 4 is the first description of life for humans outside of the garden. This is not where God created people to live! They were created to live with him and to worship him. The garden in Eden was a temple that Adam and Eve were to cause to grow. Now, because of sin, they have been driven from the temple and from God's presence. The very fact that Adam and Eve are allowed to live outside of the garden is evidence of God's grace. He is graciously continuing his relations with people even though they have rebelled against him.

Based on God's words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, the reader should expect that life outside of the garden will be difficult. However, this chapter describes conditions that are far worse than the reader could have imagined!

We see two kinds of worship in this chapter—true worship (Abel) and false worship (Cain). We see the terrible effects of sin upon a person and upon a family: Cain murders Abel. Because of this, he is forced to live as a wanderer on earth. We see many people born in this chapter and even read about some of their accomplishments. Some are musicians. Some are metal workers. But God is noticeably absent in the description of their accomplishments. It is as if people are living without God! Later in the chapter, there is a poem celebrating the murder of a boy! The author is a man with two wives! This is very different from God's original intent for a man and his wife seen in Genesis 2! This stunning poem celebrating death is the first poem spoken by humans outside of the garden! The hope of a snake-crushing offspring seen in Genesis 3:15 is, like a flame that is about to die out, almost gone! Only at the very end of the chapter does the reader find any hope. The description of Seth's birth reminds the reader of the offspring promised in Genesis 3:15. God has not forgotten his promise—he has appointed another offspring instead of Abel! In spite of the wickedness of people, God's plan is still in place. Based on Moses's description, the reader is led to place his or her hope on Seth and upon his children. One of them, the reader is led to believe, will be the offspring who crushes the serpent's head. Unfortunately, it will be a long wait before the offspring comes. There will be many terrible birth pains experienced by God's people before the offspring described in Genesis 3:15 finally comes (see Revelation 12:1-6 for a description of the long "birth pains" experienced by the people of God before the offspring—Jesus!—was finally born).

Genesis 4¹²⁰

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”¹²¹ 2 And

¹²⁰ This chapter describes the very first battle in the very long war that will take place between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman (see Genesis 3:15). Already, “enmity” is seen in the relationship between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman. Moses does not say that Abel is the offspring of the woman and that Cain is the offspring of the serpent. The reader needs to figure this out on his or her own. However, there are clues that are given so the reader should be able to discern which of the two is most like the serpent and which of the two bears the image of Yahweh. **Clues that Cain is the offspring of the serpent are as follows:** (1) The reader is told that Yahweh had “no regard for Cain and his offering”, (2) Yahweh tells Cain that sin is crouching at Cain’s door but he must master it, (3) Yahweh tells Cain that he will be accepted if he does “well”—this means he hadn’t been doing well before this time, (4) Cain does not attempt to obey Yahweh’s instructions, even though Yahweh has told him what to do, (5) Cain lies to his brother and kills him, (6) Cain lies about killing his brother. All of these things are very serpent-like! Additional evidence that Cain is considered to be the offspring of the serpent is found in the New Testament (see 1 John 3:12 and Jude 11). **Clues that Abel is the offspring of the woman are as follows:** (1) Abel brings “of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions”—this seems to indicate that Abel deliberately chose the very best, (2) the text indicates that Yahweh “had regard for Abel and his offering”. He was doing well in God’s sight. Additional evidence that Abel is considered to be the offspring of the woman is found in the New Testament (see Matthew 23:35, Luke 11:51, Hebrews 11:4, and 1 John 3:12). In this chapter, the offspring of the serpent (Cain) defeats the offspring of the woman (Abel). It is not until the end of the chapter that the reader finds some hope. But this battle between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman extends far beyond this chapter. It does not end until the end of Revelation 20! All people are part of this conflict!

¹²¹ Eve is excited about the birth of Cain. Based on the promise made regarding offspring in Genesis 3:15, it is likely she thinks Cain might be the fulfillment of the promise about the offspring. That’s why she says that she has “**gotten a man with the help of Yahweh**”. Again, it is likely she thinks he will be the offspring who will bruise the head of the serpent. Eve doesn’t know the future. She doesn’t know that Cain will not be counted as her offspring. He will be counted as offspring of the serpent (see 1 John 3:12). Beyond this, she does not know that it will be many, many generations before the snake-crushing offspring (Jesus) will be born. A great deal of pain and suffering was yet to come before the birth of the true offspring.

Carefully compare Eve’s description of Cain’s birth in 4:1 (she calls Cain “a **man**”) with Eve’s later description of Seth’s birth in Genesis 4:25 (she calls Seth “another **offspring**”). This is a clue to the reader! Based on Cain’s deeds, it is clear that Eve changes her opinion about Cain. In 4:25, Eve calls both Abel and Seth her “offspring”. This means that **she did not consider Cain to be her offspring. She considered him to be the offspring of the serpent.**

Notice God’s name here. He is simply called “Yahweh”. By calling him Yahweh Eohim in 2:4-3:24, the reader has been prepared for this shortened name and knows it is not referring to a new and different god.

again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep,¹²² and Cain a worker of the ground. **3** In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, **4** and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, **5** but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.¹²³ So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. **6** The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? **7** If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”¹²⁴

8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.¹²⁵ **9** Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”¹²⁶ He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” **10** And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.”¹²⁷ **11** And now you are cursed from the ground,

122 Abel is a shepherd. Sheep and shepherds will play significant roles in later scriptures. This is an early hint that the people of God will be associated with sheep and shepherds. Later scriptures speak of God’s people being like sheep. Like sheep, the people of God are destined to suffer. They are described as sheep who are “led to the slaughter”. Jesus, of course, is the ultimate sheep who was “led to the slaughter” (see Revelation 5:6-14). Beyond this, the leaders of God’s people are associated with shepherds. This, again, is an early hint of themes that will play a major theme in later scriptures. See Psalm 44:11, Isaiah 53:7, Romans 8:36, and 1 Peter 5:1-5.

123 The reader is not told why God had “no regard” for the offering of Cain. Moses has not chosen to tell his readers why this is the case. Fortunately, the New Testament does tell us the reason. Cain did not offer his sacrifice in faith (see Hebrews 11:4). Some have thought that God did not accept Cain’s offering because it included no blood. However, it should be noted that there were grain offerings made by the Israelites which included no blood.

124 This is grace! Cain did not have to sin and God is providing him with a way out. Cain does not want a way out of his sin. He wants to sin.

125 See Hebrews 11:4. The author to the Hebrews wants his readers to know that Abel is still speaking even though he has died. This seems to be an indication that his faith has given him eternal life (see John 3:16) and that he is, through his deeds, still speaking to people about righteousness. Abel’s life during this age may have been cut short. Because of Christ, however, he will live forever.

126 Yahweh also asked a question of Adam and Eve when they sinned. Again, God knows all things. Hearing the answers people give in response to God is a benefit to the reader. We get to see how sin deceptively works in people.

127 The writer to the Hebrews speaks of the blood of Christ speaking a better word than the blood of Abel (see Hebrews 12:24). By this, the author means that Abel’s blood was crying out to God for judgment. Christ’s blood, however, is crying out to God for mercy. Mercy is a “better word” than judgment.

which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. **12** When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."¹²⁸

13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." **15** Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. **16** Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod,¹²⁹ east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch.¹³⁰ When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.¹³¹ **18** To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered

Lamech. **19** And Lamech took two wives.¹³² The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. **20** Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. **21** His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.¹³³ **22** Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was

¹²⁸ Cain, like his parents, is judged by God. Here, we see that life outside the garden, even though it is difficult, is sustainable because of God's blessing. We know this because God says that the strength of the earth (a blessing from God) will be withheld from Cain. God is gracious to people living outside of the garden.

¹²⁹ The name Nod is like the name fugitive.

¹³⁰ Based on Cain's life, readers should not be expecting Cain's descendants to bear the image of God (see Genesis 1:28). It is not a surprise that Cain's descendants, like their forefather, bear the image of the serpent. Even though his descendants accomplish great things from an earthly perspective, they do not obey God's commission to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with his image.

¹³¹ People are being fruitful and multiplying (see Genesis 1:28). But they are not doing it in the way God intended. God's image is not being multiplied. Instead, the image of the serpent is being multiplied. This is clear because of the murder and wickedness that go along with Cain's descendants.

¹³² Earlier, we saw that man was to have a helper. Here, just two chapters after God's original design for marriage is explained and celebrated, we have people perverting God's good purposes in marriage. Now, people are taking two wives in marriage!

¹³³ Supposed great accomplishments of mankind—the development of farming and music and metal work—are mentioned in three brief verses. The author (Moses) doesn't focus on them because they are not important. The reader is to care about the things the author cares about. The author cares about how people relate to God and worship him.

Genesis 4

Naamah.

23 Lamech said to his wives:¹³⁴

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;

you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:

I have killed a man for wounding me,

a young man for striking me.

24

If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold,

then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”¹³⁵

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.”¹³⁶

26 To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ This is the first poem spoken by humans outside of the garden. Compare the first poem of people before the fall (Genesis 2:23) with this poem. In the first poem, Adam rejoices in Eve and commits to treat her as he treats his own flesh. In this poem, Lamech celebrates killing a boy because of an injury and declares that God will protect him because of this. The wickedness of mankind has become very great!

¹³⁵ This is another example of how far people have fallen because of sin. Lamech is so confused about right and wrong, he thinks God will, based on his actions in killing the young man, be pleased with him and will protect him.

¹³⁶ The reader has not had any hope for an entire chapter. Here, however, is hope. Eve is going to have another **offspring**. She demonstrates that she is still looking for God to keep his word and provide the one who will crush the serpent and deliver the world from evil. Based on Eve’s words, it is clear that Eve does not consider Cain to be her true offspring. It appears she considers him to be offspring of the serpent (see Genesis 3:15).

¹³⁷ This is a clue that we are to pay attention to the descendants of Seth, for they are counted as **offspring** of the woman. This connects them to the promise of the snake-crushing offspring of the woman in Genesis 3:15. The end of chapter 4 shows us which of the people on the earth (at that time) were seeking after Yahweh. Cain’s people were not seeking after Yahweh. They were killing people and celebrating it with poems! Like Eve, the reader is looking in hope at Eve’s new offspring. The offspring will come from this one!

This verse demonstrates that, in spite of the killing and hatred that is now filling the earth, God is not done with humanity. His grace is working! People, even though it is a small number, still want him!

Revelation 21-22:5

New heaven and earth and the new Jerusalem

These verses are, in many ways, connected to Genesis 1-3. In fact, it would be a great help to the preacher or teacher to read the first three chapters of the Bible before reading these verses in Revelation.

But while these verses are connected to Genesis 1-3, they are, at the same time, very different from Genesis 1-3. A new Adam (Jesus) and his bride (the church) have been placed in a new garden. The garden is not small. It is enormous! And there is no threat of evil. Adam and his bride have conquered the serpent! There is no curse. There are no tears. There is no death. Everything flourishes. The dwelling place of God is with people!

The reader needs to remember that this is apocalyptic literature. John is still using symbols in his writing. Thus, the reader needs to think very carefully about the symbols and what the symbols might represent. Many of these symbols are drawn from Genesis 1-2. Many are drawn from other portions of the Bible (particularly the Old Testament).

For instance, John measures the city and it is a perfect golden cube. The only other perfect golden cube in the Bible is the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple! That was a small holy “space” surrounded by a great deal of space that was not holy. In the new heavens and the new earth, however, everything will be holy! God will be celebrated in every place!

In the original Holy of Holies, only the high priest was welcome. In this new Holy of Holies, however, all people are welcome because all people are holy! All people are able to freely commune with God.

The symbols in these verses are intended to bring help and encouragement and strength to the churches. This means that the preachers or teachers need to carefully study these symbols and help the people think very hard about the meaning behind the symbols. The symbols in these verses are grace from God for the churches. They help the reader persevere during these times of intense suffering.

Revelation 21

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,¹³⁸ and the sea was no more.¹³⁹
2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,¹⁴⁰ prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.¹⁴¹ **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.¹⁴² **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more,

138 See Isaiah 65:17-25, 66:22-23, and 2 Peter 3:13. When the first heaven and earth pass away, the curse will also pass away (see Genesis 3:17 and Revelation 22:3)! See also Romans 8:18-25. In this passage, Paul speaks of the current creation waiting “with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God”. When this event happens (at the second coming), then “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God”.

It may be helpful to read Genesis 1-3 before reading Revelation 21-22, for these two sections of the Bible are very similar yet very different!

139 This is symbolic language. The sea is associated with judgment, chaos, and danger in the Bible. One example of the danger associated with the sea is that the beast rose “out of the sea” (Revelation 13:1). In the new heaven and new earth there will be no more places where dangerous things live and hide. All of the earth will be filled with goodness. The sea is also associated with sin. In Revelation, the merchants trading Babylon’s products were traveling on the sea (see Revelation 18:15-19). In the new heaven and new earth, there will be no people doing any business with Babylon. It, and everything connected with it, will be destroyed.

140 John sees the new Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth. This demonstrates that, after the second coming, “heaven” will no longer be located away from this earth. It will be on earth. In fact, heaven and earth will be joined. God will dwell with his people! The true city of God has been the hope of the saints even before the time of Christ. Carefully consider Hebrews 11:10-16. According to the writer to the Hebrews, Abraham was “looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God”. The author goes on to speak of others who “died in faith”. These people, according to the writer, were “seeking a homeland”. The writer goes on to say, “they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city”. The prophets wrote of this place (see Isaiah 2:2-5, 60:15-22, Ezekiel 20:40-44, Zephaniah 3:14-20, and Zechariah 1:14-17). Saints today should imitate these saints and long for the new Jerusalem (see Hebrews 13:14). These verses about the new Jerusalem should cause the church to walk in holiness and to avoid Babylon. Even now, the saints are to consider themselves citizens of the new Jerusalem (see Galatians 4:26, Philippians 3:17-21, and Hebrews 12:22-24). Psalm 107 tells the story of God’s people coming “from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south” (107:3) to “a city to dwell in” (107:7).

141 See Isaiah 61:10.

142 The promise that God will dwell with his people should cause God’s people to walk in holiness. See Leviticus 26:11-12, Jeremiah 31:1, Ezekiel 37:27, Zechariah 2:6-12, and 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”¹⁴³

21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”¹⁴⁴ Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” **6** And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”¹⁴⁵ **7** The one who conquers¹⁴⁶ will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”¹⁴⁷ **8** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”¹⁴⁸

21:9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will

¹⁴³ See Revelation 7:17 and Isaiah 25:8. The “former things have passed away” means that everything associated with sin and the curse will pass away at this time.

¹⁴⁴ See 2 Corinthians 5:17. Those who trust in Christ are new creations. However, newness on the inside is only a partial gift from God. He promises to make all things new.

¹⁴⁵ This passage about the new Jerusalem is supposed to make people “thirsty” for God. God promises that all those who are thirsty will be satisfied. See Isaiah 55:1 and John 7:37.

¹⁴⁶ The churches must conquer. See Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, and 3:5, 12, 21.

¹⁴⁷ This is a reference to 2 Samuel 7:14. Once again, promises that applied to the Lord Jesus are applied to the saints because they are “in him”. Readers should carefully examine 2 Samuel 7:1-17.

¹⁴⁸ Sinners have no place in the new Jerusalem. It is important for all people to carefully consider those who are counted as sinners in this verse. Not only are “murderers” excluded from the new Jerusalem. Other, seemingly smaller, categories of sinners are also excluded: the “cowardly” and the “faithless”. This is a gracious warning from God. **He takes all sin very seriously.** Those who call themselves saints need to examine their lives and see if they truly are conquering in the way that is described in Revelation. **Only those who conquer** will have the new Jerusalem as their heritage (see Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, and 21). All others will be thrown into the lake of fire. See Revelation 20:11-15. See also Matthew 25:31-46.

Revelation 21

show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁴⁹ **10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain,¹⁵⁰ and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,¹⁵¹ **11** having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. **12** It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— **13** on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. **14** And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.¹⁵²

21:15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.¹⁵³ **16** The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured

¹⁴⁹ “Come, I will show you ...”. The story of the bride begins exactly like the story of the prostitute Babylon (see Revelation 17:1). By using the same language, it is clear that John wants his readers to compare both cities and to decide which city they want to live in and which city they want to recognize as their home.

The “bride” is described here as a city. However, in Revelation 19:7-8, the bride is a description of the people of God. Is the bride a city or is it a people? **The bride is the people of God in their perfected state.** No longer are the people of God like the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. They are now clothed in white. In the same way that Babylon is a symbol of the wicked people who follow Satan and his beasts, so the new Jerusalem is a symbol of the righteous people who follow Christ. Regarding the saints as the bride of Christ, see Ephesians 5:22-33.

¹⁵⁰ The fact that John is brought to a “great, high mountain” is probably intended to remind the reader of key Old Testament passages related to the kingdom of God. For instance, in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision recorded in Daniel 2, a giant image (representing various human kingdoms) is destroyed by a stone. The image becomes like chaff and blows away (this is intended to remind the reader of Psalm 1:4). At this point, the reader’s attention is no longer on the image. It is on the stone, which begins growing: “But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (verse 35). The stone is representative of Christ. The mountain seems to represent Christ and the people of God. John’s reference to a “great, high mountain” in Revelation 21 demonstrates that the events pictured in Daniel 2 have come to pass! There are no more human kingdoms standing in opposition to God. The kingdom of God is the only kingdom! See also Exodus 15:17, Psalm 48:1, and Isaiah 2:2-3.

¹⁵¹ See Revelation 3:12.

¹⁵² Verse 12 refers to the “twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”. Their names are written on the gates of the city. Verse 14 refers to the “twelve Apostles of the Lamb”. Their names are written on the wall of the city. These 24 names symbolize the unity of the people of God. There are not two peoples of God (i.e., Israel from the Old Testament and the church from the New Testament). There is one people of God. See Ephesians 2:11-22.

¹⁵³ The temple was measured in Revelation 11:1-3 and Ezekiel 40-48. In both of those passages, the measuring was symbolic. This is also symbolic.

the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.¹⁵⁴ **17** He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.¹⁵⁵ **18** The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.¹⁵⁶ **19** The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, **20** the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.¹⁵⁷ **21** And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

21:22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the LORD God the Almighty and the Lamb.¹⁵⁸ **23** And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.¹⁵⁹ **24** By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, **25** and its gates will never be shut

154 The new Jerusalem, in this vision, is a perfect cube. This is symbolic language. It is significant to note that the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple was also a perfect cube (see 1 Kings 6:20). The new Jerusalem is an enormous Holy of Holies! The entire earth has become like the Holy of Holies! The second Adam (Jesus) has done what the first Adam did not do. He has brought God's presence into all the earth! See Genesis 1:26-28.

155 The walls of the city are massive. This is symbolic of the great strength of this city.

156 The Holy of Holies in the ancient temple was also pure gold. Again, this is symbolic of the fact that the entire earth has become like the Holy of Holies.

157 In the Old Testament, Aaron the High Priest wore a garment with 12 stones on it. The 12 stones represented the people of God (see Exodus 28:15-29). This is representative of the precious value of God's people. The fact that these stones are all different may represent the differences between God's people. God's people come from every tribe and tongue. While they are different, all are precious.

158 The meeting place between God and man will not be a building. It will be face-to-face! The citizens of this city, every one of them, will be priests!

159 This is, again, symbolic language. This does not mean that there will be no sun shining on the new earth. This does not mean that we will never again enjoy a sunrise or see a sunset. It means that all brightness will come from God. See Revelation 22:5. Passages like Isaiah 30:26 demonstrate that the language regarding the sun is symbolic. Regarding the Lamb being the lamp, see Revelation 1:16.

Revelation 21

by day¹⁶⁰—and there will be no night there.¹⁶¹ **26** They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.¹⁶² **27** But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ In ancient cities, the gates of the city could be shut during the day to keep evildoers from entering the city. The gates would be shut at night to keep evil from coming in while the people in the city were asleep. The open gates are symbolic of the fact that there will be no evil that could come into this city. All will be safe all of the time.

¹⁶¹ See also 22:5. This is symbolic. It does not mean that there will never be sunsets in heaven. It does not mean that there will never be a full moon again. Darkness is connected with danger and with crime. This passage is emphasizing that there will be no more evil or danger.

¹⁶² This, too, is symbolic. No longer are nations trying to exalt themselves. Rather, all people are submitted to God's authority.

¹⁶³ This is another gracious warning from God. Only those who are written in the book of life will see the new Jerusalem. See Philippians 4:4 and Revelation 20:11-15.

Revelation 22:1-5

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.¹⁶⁴ The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.¹⁶⁵ **3** No longer will there be anything accursed,¹⁶⁶ but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. **4** They will see his face,¹⁶⁷ and his name will be on their foreheads.¹⁶⁸ **5** And night will be no more.¹⁶⁹ They will need no light of lamp or sun,¹⁷⁰ for the LORD God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁴ There are two symbols in 22:1-2: the **river of the water of life** and the **tree of life**. These are clearly intended to remind the reader of the garden of Eden. It is significant to note that immediately after the tree of life is first mentioned in Genesis 2:9, a river flowing out of Eden is also mentioned (see 2:10). Again, the new Jerusalem is the fulfillment of what was planned in the garden of Eden! The river and the tree of life also appear together again in Psalm 1 and Ezekiel 47:1-12. Both of these passages should be studied carefully as they are connected to the life Christians already have in Christ and, as Revelation 22 teaches, to the age to come. Although John's words in Revelation 22 about the new Jerusalem concern the time period after Jesus' second coming, it is clear from Jesus' words in John 4:7-15 and 7:37-39 that believers can already partake of the water of life. Based on Jesus' words in John 15:1-11 and Paul's words in Galatians 5:22-23, believers can already taste the fruit of the coming age. Fruitfulness is already being seen in the lives of believers! Other passages connected to these images in Revelation 22:1-2 include Psalm 46:4, Joel 3:18, Zechariah 14:8, and Revelation 2:7. These should be studied carefully.

¹⁶⁵ See Ezekiel 47:12.

¹⁶⁶ See Genesis 3:17 and Romans 8:18-25.

¹⁶⁷ In Exodus 33:20, Yahweh told Moses, "... you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live". In Deuteronomy 18, Moses said, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me". Jesus is the one who sees God face to face! However, because we know him, no longer is anything between God and man. All separation between God and man has been removed! See John 1:18.

¹⁶⁸ See Revelation 3:12 and 14:1.

¹⁶⁹ This is symbolic language. This does not mean that the saints will never again enjoy a beautiful sunset or see the moon reflecting on the water. The reader needs to remember that, in this present age, night is often associated with sin and danger. For instance, this is often the time when thieves break into houses. Darkness is associated with crime. The fact that there will be no more night means there will be no more danger anywhere.

¹⁷⁰ This, again, is symbolic language. It does not mean, for instance, that the warm glow of a candle will never again be enjoyed. This is symbolic of the fact that God's presence will be everywhere.

¹⁷¹ See Daniel 7:27. Notice, the emphasis is not on Christ reigning. It is on the saints reigning. John's words are meant to make people think very hard about their own destiny. Will they be reigning, or will they be thrown into the lake of fire?



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