

INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking again this morning at Genesis chapter two, so please take your Bibles and turn with me to Genesis chapter 2.
2. We have already looked at the six days of creation in chapter 1 and God ceasing His work on the seventh day in chapter 2.
3. We also looked last time at the creation of man in chapter 2 and learned from this point in Genesis everything moves forward with man.
4. Chapter 1 was the “generations of the heavens and the earth when they were

created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven” (v.4).

5. Now in chapter two we’re seeing the “generations” of the first man, Adam, when he was created from “the dust from the ground” (v.7).
6. In verses 5 and 6 we even got a glimpse of what happened after man sinned.
7. Verse 6 says, “Now no shrub (sia) of the field.”
8. This referred to the “thorns and thistles” or “weeds” in 3:18.
9. There was “no [thorns and thistles] yet in the earth,” and no plant of the field” which referred to bread in 3:18, “and there was

no man to cultivate the ground,” which is how you get bread.

10. “But a spring used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground” (v.6).
11. Before man’s fall, He lived in a paradise called the garden of God in Eden.
12. There were no thorns, thistles, weeds or ground to cultivate for bread because it was perfect and none of these things were present.
13. There was no rain and wouldn’t be for 1000 years but a spring watered “the whole surface of the ground.”

14. Moses gives us more about this paradise that Adam lived in beginning at verse 8.
15. Read Genesis 2:8-17.
16. In chapter 1, we were told that “God created man in His own image.”
17. That means that God made man special from all the other creatures that He created.
18. None of them were made with the ability for relationship, creativity, self-consciousness, will, emotion, etc.
19. Even today we see the effects of man being in the image of God when we look around and see his creativity.

20. Recently we were at Disney World and one of the shows we saw was called the Carousel of Progress.
21. It addressed how man has progressed with the use of various inventions like Thomas Edison's snap on electric lights, horseless trolleys, electric starters in cars, Charles Lindbergh's solo flight over the Atlantic and traveling by train from NY to CA in 3 days.
22. This was just a few things it mentioned as it looked at the 1900s, 1920s, 1940s, and the 21st century.
23. Of course the creativity hasn't stopped.
24. Just about everyone in here has a mini computer that they also talk on called a

cell phone.

25. You can also see all the technology up here on the platform: sound amplification, picture projection, etc.
26. Of course, we can't forget about our creature comforts like AC :)
27. All of this is because man was created in the image of God but when you think also about the earth that God made and where God put the first man, it's staggering.
28. There are some amazing sites in this world.
29. I have put together a slideshow of 10 of some of the most amazing places in the

world.

30. Slide show of (1) Lake Louise, Canada, (2) Douro Valley, Portugal, (3) Mount Fuji, Japan, (4) Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, (5) Reine, Norway, (6) Iguazu Falls, Argentina, (7) The Maroon Bells, Colorado, (8) White Desert, Egypt, (9) Nuuk, Greenland, (10) Grand Prismatic Spring, Wyoming
31. As you look at all these beautiful places, nothing compares to “the Garden” God created “east of Israel” (v.8) in “Eden” (v.8).
32. According to verse 9, it had “every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food” (v.9).

33. This place was paradise!

34. Let's take a look as we see in verse 8...

LESSON

I. God Planted A Garden (vv.8-14)

Verse 8 begins with the same two names we saw in verse 4: “the LORD God” (LORD - YHWH, God - Elohim)

“The LORD God *planted*” meaning immediately after fashioning man the Lord God planted the garden.¹

The word for “garden” refers to a fairly large area...where trees also grow. The

¹ Cassuto, U. [*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah \(Genesis I–VI 8\)*](#). Trans. Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998. Print.

Septuagint translates **garden** by a word meaning “paradise”.²

It had “every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food” and “the tree of life” and “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” and a “river”

Notice also this “garden” is described as being:

A. Toward the East (v.8a)

If “eastward” was used in relationship to where Moses was when he wrote, then it could have been in the area of Babylon, the Mesopotamian Valley.³

² Reyburn, William David, and Euan McG. Fry. [A Handbook on Genesis](#). New York: United Bible Societies, 1998. Print. UBS Handbook Series.

³ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

We know that the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow in that area and verse 14 mentions both of them.

B. In Eden (v.8b)

1. Eden means “a place that is well watered”⁴
2. It later became associated with the word for luxury and delight.⁵
3. The Babylonians called the lush green land from which water flowed *edenu*; today, the term “oasis” describes such a place.⁶
4. Whenever Eden is mentioned in Scripture it is pictured as a fertile

⁴ www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-227/man-in-the-garden-of-god

⁵ Ibid., Reyburn.

⁶ Ibid., MacArthur.

area, a well-watered oasis with large trees growing, a very attractive prospect in the arid East.⁷

- a) Isaiah 51:3 (NASB) Indeed, the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

- b) Ezekiel 31:8-9 (NASB) is comparing Eden to Assyria when describing its beauty: ‘The cedars in God’s garden could not match it; the cypresses could not compare with its boughs, and the

⁷ Wenham, Gordon J. [Genesis 1–15](#). Vol. 1. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998. Print. Word Biblical Commentary.

plane trees could not match its branches. No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty. 9 'I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, and all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it.

- c) In speaking judgment to Pharaoh, God says in Ezekiel 31:16 (NASB) I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall when I made it go down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit; and all the well-watered trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, were comforted in the earth beneath.

C. It's Where God Placed Man (v.8c)

Verse 8 ends with saying “and there He placed the man whom He had formed.” Moses will say more about this in verse 15.

It's like the end of verse 8 is a mention of man and then verse 9 returns to the garden God planted but this time he gives details.

It's like chapter one. Moses gives the facts of the creation and then in chapter two he gives the details of the 6th day.

D. God Caused the Trees to Grow (v.9)

“Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the

sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

God was not creating again but [causing] every tree to grow

The object of this verse is not to inform us of the original creation of the different *kinds* of trees, but to tell us of the growth of those trees that were in the garden.

Hence there is no contradiction between this verse and 1:12.

The species were already in existence—in other places—but now, in order to form the garden, the Lord God caused to grow , from the ground that He had chosen”⁸

⁸ Ibid., Cassuto.

What kind of trees did He cause to grow?

1. The kind of trees that were pleasing to the sight
2. The kind of trees that were good for food
3. He mentions “the tree of life” and “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” were in the midst of the garden
 - a) The “tree of life” was a real tree, with special properties to sustain eternal life.⁹

It endows man, when he eats of its fruit, with eternal life. The

⁹ Ibid., MacArthur.

Torah mentions this tree with the definite article, as something well known to the reader. Apparently, the concept was widely current among the Israelites, as may be deduced also from the fact that the expression *tree of life* serves as a common simile for things from which the power of life flows.¹⁰

The Gilgamesh epic also mentions that its hero found in a deep well a plant that would confer “youth in old age” (11:268–89). Gen 3:22 notes that this tree too would also confer life on those who ate its fruit. Proverbs describes wisdom (3:18), the fruit of the righteous

¹⁰ Ibid., Cassuto.

(11:30), a desire fulfilled (13:12), and a gentle tongue as a tree of life: in other words, they give fullness of life to their owners.¹¹

- b) The “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” was a real tree too but may have been placed there as a test of obedience since Adam was commanded not to eat from it (v.17).

E. A River Watered the Garden (vv.10-14)

“Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is good;

¹¹ Ibid., Wenham

the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.”

Here the geography of the garden of Eden is described.

This is before the Flood, before everything was altered.

1. Verse 10 says **a river** (literally, a flowing water, applicable to large oceanic floods—Job 22:16; Ps. 24:2; 46:5; Jonah 2:4—as well as to narrow streams).¹²

¹² Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. [Genesis](#). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit Commentary.

2. Verse 10 says it **flowed out** which means it “rose, had its source, had its headwaters”; that is, “A river began to flow from Eden” or “A river had its headwaters in Eden.” This is the main river and is not named.
3. **To water the garden** means “to irrigate the garden” or “to water the trees and plants in the garden.”
4. **And there it divided and became four rivers: there** can mean that the division took place in Eden before reaching the garden, or that there were four tributaries in Eden that flowed into the main stream, or that the main river divided into four streams somewhere in the garden, or, as nearly all modern translations

interpret it, that the main river flowed through the garden and upon leaving the garden divided into four streams. This last view is the one recommended to translators.

5. **Four rivers** is literally “four heads,” which refers to the parting points where the smaller streams separate from the main river.¹³
6. Verses 11-14 group the four rivers into two groups:

The first two are Pishon and Gihon; the second two are the Tigris (Hiddekel in Hebrew) and the Euphrates.

¹³ Ibid., Reyburn.

a) Pishon (v.11) is a Hebrew root word that means to jump and run to and fro (which certainly describes a river).

(1) It is mentioned in Gen.10:7; 1 Chron.1

(2) It is also the name of one of the sons of Kush

(3) It “flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there”
(vv.11-12)

(4) Havilah is a land that is mentioned among the sons of

Jaktan (Gen.10:7,29; 1 Chron.1:9,23) and Jaktan is associated with a place called Opher where there is gold

(5) It says in verse 12 that “the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.”

(6) Havilah was said to be a land rich in gold, precious stones (though the exact nature of the so-translated “onyx stone” is uncertain), and a precious gum called bdellium (likened to the miraculous substance called “manna” in Numbers 11:7)¹⁴ but refers more to

¹⁴ Morris, Henry M. [*The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976. Print.

appearance than color, i.e., it had the appearance of a pale resin.¹⁵

(7) Ezekiel 28:13 (NASB) “You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.”

(8) So Pishon and Havilah would be lands to the south of Israel

¹⁵ Ibid., MacArthur.

and the south of the Mesopotamian valley which we know today as Iraq and Iran and even down to Saudi Arabia (the land configuration has changed because of the Flood)

b) Gihon is the second river (v.13)

(1) “It flows around the whole land of Cush” (v.13)

(2) It's also the name of Jerusalem's principal spring, the virgin's spring (cf. 1 Kings 1:33, 38). But it seems unlikely that this could be described as “going round all

the land of Cush.”

- (3) It is the mention of the land of Cush which has led most ancient and modern commentators to identify this Gihon with the Nile.
- (4) Usually Cush refers to the land of Ethiopia (e.g., Isa 20:3, 5; Jer 46:9), but in Gen 10:8 it means the Cassites, the successors to the old Babylonian empire who were at home in the hills of western Iran.
- (5) Speiser and Weinfeld have argued that the land of Cush is the land of the Cassites and

that the Gihon is one of the rivers or canals of Mesopotamia.

(6) This makes it easier to envisage a point where all the rivers met, possibly in the mountains of Armenia or at the head of the Persian gulf, but since it is only in Gen 10:8 that Cush may be equated with the Cassites, this view has difficulties.¹⁶

c) Tigris or Hiddekel is the third river (v.14)

(1) Tigris is familiar and flows out of eastern Turkey and northern Iraq to cross modern

¹⁶ Wenham, Gordon J. [Genesis 1–15](#). Vol. 1. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998. Print. Word Biblical Commentary.

Iraq and join the Euphrates before emptying into the Persian Gulf.¹⁷

(2) Today (post Flood) it runs NW to SE east of the city of Babylon through the Mesopotamian Valley¹⁸

(3) It flows east of Assyria is unknown

(4) The ancient Hebrew name for **Tigris** is *chiddeqel* (Hiddekel), which is found elsewhere in Dan 10:4.

¹⁷ Ibid., Reyburn.

¹⁸ Ibid., MacArthur.

d) Euphrates is the fourth river
(v.14)

(1) Nothing is said of this river

(2) It runs parallel (NW to SE) to
the Tigris and empties into the
Persian Gulf after joining the
Tigris.¹⁹

Verse 15 picks up where verse 8 leaves off...

II. God Puts Man in the Garden (vv.15-17)

“Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you

¹⁹ Ibid., MacArthur

shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

It should be noted that even before the fall man was expected to work; paradise was not a life of leisured unemployment.²⁰

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NASB) For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

There are 3 reasons why God put man in the garden of Eden:

A. To Serve (v.15a)

1. This is the literally rendering of the Hebrew word abad which is used for service and for tilling the soil (e.g.,

²⁰ Ibid., Wenham.

3:23; 4:2, 12) or for other labor (e.g., Isa 19:9)

2. It also speaks of “service” to another (e.g., 29:15; 31:6) and is often used of worship (e.g., Exod 3:12).⁹⁶
3. The verb and its noun derivative “service” (*‘ăbōdâ*) frequently describe Levitical duties in tabernacle and temple worship.⁹⁷
4. It also speaks of the completed “work” on the tabernacle (Exod 39:32, 42).
5. The rabbinic interpretation...explains the term to refer to the sacrificial service [which] corresponds to an ancient tradition of the Orient, often

mentioned in Mesopotamian inscriptions, according to which man was created for the express purpose of *serving God*.²¹

6. Moses used this word when God said to him in Exodus 3:12 (NASB) And He said, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship [serve] God at this mountain.”

B. To Keep (v.15b)

1. **Keep** translates a verb meaning “to be in charge of,” which is used in Gen 30:31 with the sense of “to tend

²¹ Ibid., Cassuto.

or take care of sheep.”

2. The more general sense is “to guard”

²²

3. The NASB has to “keep” (whatever that means)

C. To Obey (vv.16-17)

1. The first thing God says to man is a command

2. You can freely eat “from any tree of the garden” but one, “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”

3. If you eat from this tree you will “surely die” (death is separation from God and separation from the body.

²² Ibid., Reyburn.

Their spiritual death is seen by hiding from God and being driven from the garden. Their physical death is seen in Gen.5:5)

CONCLUSION

1. God plants a beautiful garden for man
2. Man's purpose is to serve Him in his new home
3. He is also to care for the garden and enjoy it
4. It was also to be pleasing to the eye and good for food
5. But only one command was given for him to obey...do not eat from the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil

6. Obviously man disobeyed that one command and he died (spiritually and physically).
7. And his disobedience was passed on to every person who would live after him.
8. Romans 5:12 (NASB) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.
9. Romans 5:17-19 (NASB) For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18 So then as

through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

10. Jesus provided the way for man to be reconciled to God.

11. Romans 5:6-9 (NASB) For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now

been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

12. This is what Jesus did for you and me.

13. Repent and believe in Him today and be saved from God's wrath and granted forgiveness and eternal life.

14. Let's pray.