

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #11

Genesis 2:4-7

We may recall that Genesis is a book which contains some key exegetical sections, called the “generations” (toledoth) sections (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). The purpose of these sections was to give information concerning what became of that particular subject or generation. Each section gives an historical overview of what happened to a central subject of that particular historical narrative section. This section is the first toledoth (“generations”) section and **its purpose is to inform us as to what went wrong with the universe.**

In the first account of creation, the positive word “bless” was used three times (1:22, 28; 2:1), and now in the first toledoth section the negative word “curse” is used three times (3:14, 17; 4:11). As we come to these specific verses, the purpose seems to be to give background information regarding the environment in which man lived and the purpose and prestige man once had.

MAN WAS ORIGINALLY CREATED BY THE LORD GOD AND PLACED IN A WONDERFUL ENVIRONMENT AND GIVEN GREAT RESPONSIBILITY OVER GOD’S CREATION.

POINT #1 - The LORD/God created the heavens and the earth . 2:4

The statement “This is the account” better translated “these are the generations of” is not so much of a reference to information already given in chapter 1, but rather to information that will follow in chapter 2. As Griffith Thomas said the information here is not retrospective, but prospective.

As we begin this new section, we can see that once again Moses is intent on establishing the fact that God created the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew words “created” and “made” reveal that the majestic God is the One who planned, prepared and produced the heavens and the earth and much of it He made out of nothing .

One new feature is added in this verse regarding the creation of the heavens and the earth - a new name for God. The two proper nouns LORD God, first appeared in the Bible right here in this verse. Prior to this Moses used the name “God” (Elohim). Now he prefaces this noun with the noun LORD (YHWH) from which we get our English word “Jehovah.” By carefully reading Genesis, we observe that the Divine name of 1:1-2:3 is God (Elohim). The Divine name from 2:4-3:24 is LORD/God (YHWH/Elohim). The Divine name from 4:1-26 is LORD (Jehovah) with the exception of 4:25. The first section stresses the majestic Triune God, the second stresses the self-existing, Holy, majestic Triune God and the third the self-existing, holy God.

The noun “LORD” (YHWH) was the most sacred name which God specifically gave to Himself (Exodus 3:14). The name comes from the verb of being, meaning “I am.” Israel came to recognize that this name referred to the self-existing “I AM” God, who was capable of doing, in and of Himself whatever He wanted to do. Israel also came to connect this name with God’s set-apart holiness (Exodus 3:3; Leviticus 11:44-45). This Hebrew four letter name for God

“YHWH” is commonly referred to as the tetragrammaton. The difference between God and LORD seems to be this - God emphasizes that God is totally set apart for His majesty and LORD emphasizes that God is totally set apart for His holiness. **LORD is the covenant name for God in which He was known by His people, Israel, as One who related to them and redeemed them**. This toledoth section will establish the need for redemption.

POINT #2 - The LORD/God created and sustained vegetation. **2:5-6**

There are some commentators who suggest the main emphasis of these two verses is to show that God needed man to do certain things or else certain types of vegetation would not exist. The stress of these verses is the same LORD/God who created the heavens and the earth also made the vegetation (conjunction “now” connects us to preceding verse). The point of **verse 5** is that prior to rain on the earth to water the ground and prior to man on the earth to cultivate the ground, the LORD/God created and sustained the world of vegetation (1:11-12). What this verse reveals is that there would be some plants that would not just grow without some form of agricultural skill and knowledge, which God would give man, when He made him. God created man not just to sit around and do nothing, but for the purpose of governing and ruling over His Creation.

What is being stressed here is that prior to man’s existence, the LORD/God created and sustained all things. It is true that He would give man some very prestigious responsibilities in His program, however, it is also true that **these were privileges the LORD/God gave to man and not necessities the LORD/God needed from man**.

God’s original plan was that He would permit man to govern His creation.

POINT #3 - The LORD/God created man. **2:7**

(Fact #1) - The LORD/God formed man. **2:7a** .

The word “form” refers to the creative Work of an artist (Gesenius, p. 361). God creatively designed man. He planned him and then artistically created him. Man’s intricate design comes from the creative genius of the majestic, holy, LORD/God.

(Fact #2) - The LORD/God formed man out of dust. **2:7b**

The clear statement of the Bible is that man did not evolve from another form of an animal, he came from the ground. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” not because of our ability, but because of the creative ability of God to make a human being out of the dust of the ground.

It is a known fact that man is comprised of many chemical elements of the ground. Dr. Mayo, of the famed Mayo Clinic, used to say if you wanted to build a man, “. . . you would need enough potassium for one shot of a toy pistol, enough fat for seven bars of soap, enough iron for one large nail, enough sulphur to delouse a dog, enough lime to whitewash a chicken coup, enough magnesia for one dose of medicine and enough phosphorous for a few boxes of matches! The total purchase would not fill more than a couple of grocery bags” (John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, p. 49).

The value of man does not lie in what he is made of, the value of man lies in who he was made by. Only the LORD/God can take dust and turn it into man.

(Fact #3) - The LORD/God gave man life. **2:7c**

The word “breathe” is one that is never used for animals. It only is used in reference to life that was imparted to man by God. It is true that God gave life to all the animals (Genesis 1:20-25), but it is also true that God gave a very special life to man. God gave life to animals, by His creative word, He gave it to man by His creative breath.

The verb “breathed” (yippach) refers to a deep breathing out of a life giving breath (Gesenius, p. 58). This is not human breathing as we know it, although this began the process, this is a Divine breath that can originate life. This concept of God breathing life is applied to 1) man’s life (Genesis 2:7); 2) man’s understanding (Job 32:8); 3) God’s spirit (John 20:22); and 4) God’s Word (II Timothy 3:16). This is a real life force, a life dynamic given directly by God to man.

Now the term “breath of life” is important for the Word “life” is literally “lives” plural in Hebrew. What this means is that when God first breathed life into man, He gave man the ability to produce other lives plural. In other words, ever since this account, God works through a man and woman to produce other human life. This breath contained enough power that the entire human species could be propagated.

The result of God breathing this is that man became a living soul or being. The noun “soul” or “being” refers to the immaterial part of a person, which includes his intellect, emotion and will. There is more than just something physical about a man, there is something spiritual. **It is primarily this immaterial part of a man that was created in God’s image.**

The body was originally made of dust and into dust it will return - Genesis 3:19. The soul was originally made by the breath of God and to God the soul will return. The question that must be asked and answered is what will happen to our soul on the day we face the LORD/God?

Our soul will be eternally sentenced to one of two places - everlasting life or everlasting condemnation. The remarkable message of the Bible is that even though man has so rebelled against God and so sinned against Him, God has still made it possible for him to have everlasting life. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and have everlasting life.