

In The Beginning God . . .

*An In-Depth Study of the
First Three Chapters of Genesis*

All Truth Begins Here



Unique in All Creation

INTRO: In the last study we considered the “what” of human creation: the creation of mankind in the image of God as the crowning peak of all creation and the one for whom all the creation was designed (under God). In this study of Genesis chapter two, we will consider how God made human beings, for in this chapter we have a far more detailed account of our creation as if God wished to explain more and draw a line under the uniqueness of our origin.

I. A Brief Look at Interpretative Viewpoints in Understanding Genesis Two

- A. The Documentary hypothesis of the source development of Genesis
 1. German higher critical school in the 19th Century: JEDP source theory
 2. Contemporary evangelical perspectives on source documents & editorial composition (redaction)
- B. The Framework hypothesis of Genesis chapter one
 1. Genesis one is arranged in a literary style suggesting thematic symbols and ideas
 2. It is not to be taken as a literal, time-sequenced historical narrative, but a symbolic view of creation
 3. In this viewpoint, time and sequence has no relevance and Genesis two is another symbolic concept
- C. The Literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3
 1. Genesis 1-3 and the account of the creation and fall of man is literal historical prose...it is exactly the way it happened.
 2. This viewpoint does not preclude other interpretative ideas that are less than literal, namely:
 - a. the “gap” theory of Genesis 1:1-2
 - b. the “age-day” theory of the length of creative days

II. Understanding Genesis Two As Detailed Human History Within the Sixth Day

- A. Genesis 2:4 is a transitional sentence and introduces a new type of narrative: the first chapter in human history. It is clearly retrospective and purports to explain our origin and our fall. It takes us to Genesis 6 and the account of the flood.
- B. There are clues that suggest Genesis two is a focal event within the sixth day:
 1. The history precedes the time of agriculture and cultivation of the ground
 2. The creation of mankind is not complete with the creation of the man (male), it requires the formation of the woman (female), and until this is accomplished the situation is “not good,” but the end of day six it is “very good”
 3. The covenant of chapter two explains the terms of the relationship of Adam and Eve with God, while the end of chapter one explains their relationship with creation and the earth. We would expect both before the story is complete.

III. The Creation of Human Beings is Unique & Unlike Any Other Creature

- A. Adam is formed from the dust *with* Spirit (*s*)*pirit*, and God pronounces his creation “very good”
 1. There is no opposition in Scripture between spirit & matter that suggests one is good, the other evil
 2. There is a trichotomy of Adam’s nature that suggests he is a “hybrid” between the spiritual and the material: he has a soul which results from the formation of a body from the dust and the breath of the Spirit of God
- B. Adam is still not the complete picture of “mankind in God’s image,” the woman is needed:
 1. She is not formed from the dust but from Adam, the “human stuff”
 2. She shares his human nature in its entirety: body, soul, and spirit, making her of the same essence
 3. She completes the expression of “man in the image of God” (see Genesis 5:2)
 4. She is requisite to the man for love and socialization, an aspect of God’s character, as well as the full range of the expression of His Nature in personality, mind, will, and emotion.

...to be continued next week

NOTES

Genesis 2:4-8 ⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. ⁵ Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. ⁶ But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Discuss the different viewpoints of the interpretation of Genesis chapters one and two and talk about the strengths and weaknesses of each viewpoint.
2. How does our understanding of God's nature influence our view of how Scripture should be interpreted?
3. How does the idea that material substance is inherently evil, while spiritual essence is inherently good cause all sorts of problems in how we live our lives and what we expect is possible in our Christian life?
4. Why is the concept of matter and spirit being bad and good contrary to the Bible?
5. What is the significance of woman being made out of man rather than being created out of dust like the man?
6. Explain the two different views of human beings being either body and soul only or being body, soul, and spirit in essence.