

Through the Bible - Genesis 2-3

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the significance of the Sabbath day, God's relationship with man, and the creation of the Garden of Eden.

Scripture: Genesis 2:1

Topics: "Creation", "Redemption", "Free Will"

Description

Chuck Smith explores the creation narrative in Genesis 2-3, emphasizing God's completion of creation and the establishment of the Sabbath as a day of rest. He discusses the significance of free will, highlighting how Adam and Eve's choice to eat from the tree of knowledge led to humanity's fall and the introduction of sin into the world. Smith explains that while the Sabbath was a covenant for Israel, Jesus Christ is our true rest, and believers are called to find their rest in Him. He also addresses the importance of choice in our relationship with God, underscoring that our decisions shape our destinies. Ultimately, Smith reassures that through Christ, we can regain the fellowship lost in the Garden of Eden.

Transcript

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made (Gen 2:1-3).

So we find the creation of the earth in chapter one; the placing of man upon the earth, and then the declaration that on the seventh day God rested. Not that He was tired, because of all of the energy that had been expended in the creating of the earth because God is omnipotent--that means He can't get tired--but He had finished His work, and so He just rested from His work.

In other words, there's nothing more to create. It's all been created. If God really took the day off and just kicked back and did nothing, the earth would go to pieces, because the Bible says not only was all things, were all things created by Him, but by Him all things are held together. And so God rested from His creative works, all that have been created. All that is to be created was created in that span. Nothing new is now being created. We're now in sort of a closed-in system. Nothing new is being created.

There has been since that day a gradually, a gradual deterioration of everything; the second law of thermodynamics. Everything is now gradually wearing down and slowing down and in the process of

decay. Sir Jean said that the universe is like a giant clock that was wound up and is slowly running down. And so God ceased from His creative forces and from the creation of anything new. Now God rested and from creation, so He sanctified or set apart that seventh day as a day of rest.

And God established with Israel a covenant that they should keep that Sabbath day through all their generations. Someone said, "Well when did the church start worshipping on Sunday?" And those of the church who still enjoy worshipping on Saturday try to blame Constantine for the change to Sunday worship. But there are indications; even in the book of Acts that they were gathering together on the first day of the week to break bread. Also in the letter to the Corinthians, Paul talks about when they gathered together on the first day of the week, to bring their offerings in so that there'll be no collections taken while he was there. Tertulian, one of the early church fathers, who antedates the Constantine and the whole development under Constantine, said that there were many Christians in that day who felt that the only day, really in which they should take communion was the first day of the week because that was the day that marked the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now it is interesting that the number of Jesus, in a numeric sense is the number eight, which is the number of new beginning. Seven is the number of completeness. Six is the number of man, imperfection. But when you hit the full cycle of seven, you have seven notes to the scale, seven basic colors, seven is a, seven days in the week and it's a number that speaks and has a connotation of completeness in a Biblical sense. So when you have finished the seven, you start a new cycle. Number eight then is the number of new beginning. It's starting over anew. So that in numeric structures and all, the number of Jesus is eight and all of the names for Jesus in Greek are divisible by eight, the number of new beginning.

And so it seemed like the early church met many of them on the first day of the week which would be the eighth day, the day that is the number for Christ. But there really shouldn't be any hang-up on it because Paul said in Romans fourteen, "One man esteems one day above another: another man esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). In Colossians chapter two he said, "Don't let any man judge you in respect to holy days, new moons, Sabbath days: Which are all a shadow of things to come; for the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

In other words, the Sabbath days were just a shadow of things to come. They aren't the substance. A shadow is not substance. Substance creates a shadow. The substance is Jesus. The shadow that Jesus cast on the Old Testament was the Sabbath day, the day of rest. So that Jesus has become our Sabbath as Christians.

He is our rest. We have ceased from our labors; we enter into His rest. And so Christ is our Sabbath. He is our rest. And the Sabbath days of the Old Testament were all looking forward to Jesus Christ who would bring rest. No longer is there a righteousness of works or of the law, but the righteousness now is by faith resting in Jesus Christ. And the one mark about those people who make such a big deal over a particular day to worship is they really don't have any rest. They're still seeking to achieve a righteousness before God by keeping the law. And they have not entered into the substance, into Christ and into that rest that is in Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath law was given according to Exodus chapter twenty-two to the nation Israel and to those who would proselytize into the nation becoming Jews as a proselyte. Then they were forced to keep the Sabbath day or to the strangers that were in Israel. They also were forced to keep the Sabbath day, but the Sabbath day was never a regulation that was laid upon the Gentile church.

In fact, in the book of Acts when certain brethren came to the Gentile church of Antioch and began to trouble the brethren saying that you cannot be saved except you keep the law of Moses and be circumcised, Paul and Barnabas came down to the church in Jerusalem in order to settle the issue once and for all. Peter testified of his call unto the Gentiles by God and of that initial work of the Holy Spirit when he went to them. But then Peter suggested that we not put on them a yoke of bondage, referring to the law, that neither we nor our fathers were able to keep.

Paul and Barnabas testified of the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit among the Gentiles throughout the world where they were not keeping the law. And finally, James said, "Well I suggest that we not put on them any greater burden than to write to them and give them Christian greetings and tell them to keep themselves from things that are strangled, from fornication, and if they do this, they do well". And so they wrote the letter to the church at Antioch saying, "Greetings unto you, and we just suggest that you keep yourselves from idols, from things strangled, and from fornication. And if you do this, you do well, the Lord be with you and bless you." But there was never any reference to the Gentile church of the Sabbath day or any of the rest of the law and the ordinances.

Now even that business of keeping yourself from things strangled and things offered to idols, Paul even modified that when he wrote to the Corinthians. He said, Now when you are buying your meat in the butcher shop, don't ask him if it's been offered to an idol. Just buy it and go home and eat it. Give God thanks for it. For all things are to be received with thanksgiving. And if you don't ask, then you'll have no problems. But if you ask him, "Was this offered to as a sacrifice to an idol?" And he says yes, then you're liable to have a hang up with your conscience when you eat it.

So for conscience sake, just don't ask any questions. When you're invited out to eat at somebody's house, don't say, "Was this meat offered to an idol?" He said just eat what's set before you asking no questions. That is for your conscience sake. For we know that all things are to be "received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:3). There's nothing unclean in itself. So Paul had a glorious liberty in Christ Jesus and he said, "Happy is the man whose heart condemns him not in the things that he alloweth" (Romans 14:22). So I imagine Paul ate pork chops and had great freedom in these things though he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees at one time.

So God having rested established, sanctified the seventh day and made it as a covenant with the nation Israel. But God also established a pattern. "Six days shall thou labor and do thy work and the seventh day you're to rest, a day unto the Lord" (Exodus 35:2). Now it would be extremely healthy for all of us if we would take one day a week off and just kick back and do nothing. The Sabbath was made for man because man needs one day off out of seven. The reason why we have so much mental strain, the reason why we have so many heart attacks and all, is because people haven't been following God's law of the seventh day. We keep going all the time. We don't stop to take a day off, and my wife says, "Yeah, you don't and I've been telling you to do it". But it would be healthy. It wouldn't make you any more spiritual, it'd just be good for you. You'll live longer if that's your goal.

So now as we enter into verse four, we are going to enter in now to a sort of a recapitulation of certain aspects of creation as we now amplify some of the aspects of creation. As we enter into this next section beginning with verse four, we're going to find that God is not referred to as just "Elohim" as in chapter one; but now He is "Jehovah" or "Yahweh Elohim", because now we are going to see God relating to man. And whenever God begins to relate to man, He relates to man through this marvelous name of "Yahweh" or "Jehovah". As God seeks to become to man what man needs.

And it is because of this now being an amplification of the creation of man and all, there are some people who see it as a second account and see it foolishly as contradictory to the first account, and they call the first chapter the "Elohistic" and then they call this the "Jehovahistic" and then we get into a further account they call the "priestly". And so you have the "J.E.P." theories of whether or not it was the Jehovahistic or the Elohistic or the priestly writings and they get things so confused; that we're going to leave them with their confusion and just go on and study what God has to say.

Now these are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens (Gen 2:4),

So now the LORD God, and whenever you find LORD in all capital letters as it is in this case, that means that it is that name for God that the Jews revered so highly, revered so highly, that they would not pronounce it. They would not write the vowels but only the consonants in the manuscripts. JHVH; try and pronounce that. You can't, you know, it's unpronounceable. So we don't know what vowels were there. So the general consensus of opinion is that the name was to be pronounced "Yahweh". But somewhere along the line the pronunciation of Jehovah came along or Jehovah and it has become more popular. But Yahweh is probably the correct pronunciation though we do not know for sure.

But it is the name by which God has sought to relate to man as it is the name that speaks of God's desire to become to you all that you may need. So whenever you find this all capitals LORD, it stands for that name of God. You will also find capital L, small -o-r-d, and that means that it's the translation of the Hebrew Adonai, which means Lord as a title. But the all capitals means that it's a translation of the Yahweh, Lord as a name, the name of God, the Yahweh.

So here is the first use of it in the Bible, "in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens."

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground (Gen 2:5-6).

Now it would seem that there was not a rain until the time of Noah. Prior to that in the evening, a mist would arise out of the ground and the earth would be watered with this dew or with this mist. Now it is interesting that even though there was not rain, there were rivers, four rivers that proceeded out from the Garden of Eden. How could you have rivers without rain? Creates an interesting problem that you can speculate on.

But it is very possible that there were subterranean caverns of, with tremendous volcanic heat and forces and water coming in from the sea through the subterranean caverns into this steam generator, so to speak, the volcano. The steam going up, and of course, then condensing and flowing as water, and you could have a water supply that way. You could have had at that point a lot of subterranean water. And of course, with this tremendous moisture blanket around the atmosphere, it could have provided a humidity, and of course, at night the mist going up, the earth was watered by this way prior to the flood.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen 2:7).

And so we are told that God in chapter one said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"(Gen 1:26). "And God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and he breathed into man's nostrils; and man

became a living soul", created in the likeness of God with the ability to worship God and the ability to fellowship with God.

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden (Gen 2:8);

So eastward would have been east of where He had created Adam. There is no way to really know directions. We don't know where the Garden of Eden was. There is no way of finding out where the Garden of Eden was because since that time, there have been several cataclysmic changes of the earth's geography which have changed the courses of rivers and mountains and the whole thing.

There's a very interesting book by Emmanuel Villakoski, entitled "Earth's in Upheaval", in which he shows that the Himalayas and the Andes have both been formed in actually very recent years. There are indications that Lake Titicaca, that there were civilizations around the lake when the lake was at a much lower altitude down about seven thousand feet or so. But in the last five thousand years, there has been a thrust upwards of the Andes, and thus the lake now being at around a ten thousand-foot elevation. But the book is quite interesting and quite challenging mentally. But all it is basically declaring is that there have been many changes of the earth's surface during the time of man's history. The flood, no doubt, altered the whole geographical face of the earth.

And there is one interesting little scripture that we know very little about but there's just sort of a side comment concerning the time of Peleg, that it was in his time that the earth was divided. Now there are--some of the latest theories are concerning the continental drifts, that at once everything was connected together but the continents have drifted and they are still drifting. If that theory is correct, it would be very interesting, this little sidelight, When did that happen? How long ago? What happened at the time of Peleg, and it's just--it really just sort of thrown in there just as a little grabber, and something to create an area for people to speculate about.

God doesn't say anymore about the earth being divided, except that one little remark and we'll get to it in awhile here in Genesis as it gives the genealogies, as it gives his genealogy it just gives that little addition to it. "And it was in his days that the earth was divided" (Genesis 10:25).

So "the LORD planted a garden eastward in Eden;"

and there he put the man whom he had formed (Gen 2:8).

And so God made really a special place for Adam. He formed this garden or He planted this garden. And then He placed man in it.

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:9).

So here was a beautiful garden, blossoming trees and fruit bearing trees. All there for man to just enjoy. It must have been absolutely, fabulously beautiful. God planted a garden, put in it all these beautiful flowering trees and fruit bearing trees. And in the middle of the garden, there were two trees: one, the tree of life; and the other, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it was parted, and became into four rivers. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold (Gen 2:10-11);

Now if you can only figure out where that is, you could go prospecting. Havilah, where is it? I don't know. But as I say, the whole structure of the earth has been so changed that there's no way of knowing really.

The gold that is of that land is good: there is also bdellium and onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia (Gen 2:12-13).

But no doubt a different location than where it is today. Some believe that this perhaps is the reference to the Nile River but there is really very little relation between the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates which the next two rivers,

a third river the Hiddekel [is actually the Tigris river]: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates (Gen 2:14).

So two of the rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates and some believe that these other two rivers were actually sort of channels that connected the Tigris and the Euphrates there in the Babylonian plain. And they have, most of them, tried to locate the Garden of Eden somewhere there in the Babylonian plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates River. They say that that is the cradle of civilization.

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it (Gen 2:15).

Now notice it wasn't that man didn't have anything to do. God put him there to dress the garden and to keep it. Some people picture heaven as, you know, sitting on a cloud and playing a harp and twiddling your thumbs in between numbers. Like you know, there's going to be nothing to do. Not so. God placed man in the garden to dress it and to keep it. Life would be awfully boring if there were nothing to do.

But the labor that man expended in the garden wasn't sweating kind of labor. That didn't come until after his sin that he was going to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Up to then it was just a matter of taking care of it, a caretaker and dressing it and keeping it. Far from the concept that the modern ecologists are trying to throw a guilt onto the Bible, saying that the man's raping of nature comes from the Bible because God said to have dominion over the earth, and thus man just feels that he can just do anything he wants and destroy it. And thus, the Bible is to blame for all of the ecological damage in the world. Oh how stupid can people get!

God didn't say to Adam, Just go and you know, mess it all up. Destroy it. Cut down the trees. He said, No, "dress it and keep it". Really I believe that only a child of God has a true appreciation of nature, a far greater appreciation of nature than a humanist. They are the ones who through greed have not cared for the world that God created and have so destroyed it by greed, but not by a Christian or Biblical principle at all. That's so much foolishness. But there are people who like to blame God and blame Christians for any problems, for in doing that they are pointing attention from themselves and their own guilt. God said, "Dress it, keep it".

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen 2:16-17).

So here is man placed in an ideal environment, under ideal conditions. Couldn't ask for it any nicer, any better, placed in this beautiful garden that God had planted, all kinds of fruit trees, all kinds of luscious fruits to eat of. And man is given only one restriction, that tree that is in the midst of the garden, you're not

to eat of it. And then as though God knew that he was going to, He said, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Literally dying, "thou shalt surely die." In other words, death processes will begin the day you eat of that fruit.

Now it was really a twofold death; it was a spiritual death but it was the beginning of physical death for man. It doesn't really seem that God's requirements were too stringent. But why would God put that tree there anyhow? Of all the trees that God planted in the garden, why would He plant that tree? Just think. Had He not planted that tree we wouldn't have all of the problems that we have in the world today. And if God knew that man was going to eat of it, why would He put it there? And surely God did know if He indeed is omniscient, which I am confident that He is.

God created man after His image and God, being self-determinate, created man also self-determinate, giving to man a free will. One of the most awesome things that you have is the power of choice. You can choose your own destiny. You can choose whether or not you want God to have a part in your life. You can choose to obey God or disobey God. You can choose to love God or hate God. You can choose to serve God or serve your own flesh. God has given to you the capacity of choice.

Now it is interesting to me wherever the Christian gospel has gone, there has been a very high respect for the power of choice, freedom, the freedom to choose. And whenever there is a waning of the gospel in any area, what is the consequence? A slavery of man. The loss of freedoms. Look at those nations ruled by Communism today. How they have taken away the freedoms of choice and made them very restricted and very restrictive. And as we see in this country, more and more governmental controls we realize that with each new law there comes a confining of the freedom of choice. But always where the Christian gospel has gone, it has taken with it a respect for the freedom of choice because God gave to us the freedom of choice. And we respect it as a God-given capacity.

But what value would it be to have a freedom of choice if there was nothing to choose. It would be totally meaningless that God gave to me the power to choose, but I don't have anything to choose. It's all there. It's all laid out. There is no law, there is no restriction, there is nothing; therefore, I have no choice to make, therefore my power of choice is really meaningless. So in order that the power of choice be meaningful, God had to give a choice. God had to make a restriction. In order that man's obedience to God might be meaningful, God had to give the opportunity to disobey and the choice to disobey.

The power of choice is the thing that makes man something other than a robot. God could have made us all robots with no choices, every decision coming from a superior mind that is controlling every action, every decision of my whole life and my body and everything else. But God didn't want a bunch of robots, because you could never receive meaningful love or meaningful fellowship from a robot. For love to be meaningful, the power of choice must be there. For obedience to be meaningful, the power of choice must be there. And so that my worship of God, my love for God might be fully meaningful to God, He gave to me the capacity of choice. I don't have to worship Him. I don't have to love Him. I can choose to do it or not to do it; that's my choice.

But when I choose to love God, then my love for God becomes meaningful unto God because it's a choice. I'm not a robot, I'm not just responding in a preset condition that God has built into my mental apparatus where He pushes a button in heaven and there are certain little flashes that go across my brain and my body responds automatically to these impulses from God and I say, "I love You, God". It doesn't turn anybody on. God wants our love to be meaningful. He gave us power of choice, but then He had to

give us something to choose.

But in order that the power of choice be meaningful, not only must there be something to choose but then God must respect the choice that I make. In other words, He can't force me to choose. It isn't an arm-twisting God that has you in a hammer hold and says, "Say, Praise the Lord! Say, Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" If He forced me to choose, then it's no longer meaningful. So He respects the choice that I make.

If I make a choice and oh no, you can't do that, then what's the value of having a choice? So God has given me the free will, the power to exercise that free will and then He respects the choices that I have made. Woo, that's awesome! For that means that I have the capacity to choose my own destiny, to be with God or not to be with God. And when I make my choice, God respects the choice that I make. And if I choose not to be with God, He honors that choice.

Now this is why it is so ridiculous to say, well, how can a God of love send a man to hell? He doesn't. He never did, He never will. Man goes there by his own choice, which God respects and honors. If you choose to go to hell, God will respect your choice; otherwise, giving you the power of choice would be meaningless. And then so it's very awesome to realize that capacity of God, that God-like capacity that I have of choosing, choosing my destiny. Now God calls upon us to make a choice and God does seek to influence our choices. But when you come to the bottom line, the choice is yours.

Satan is also seeking to influence your choice. But the bottom line is that neither God nor Satan makes the choice for you. You make the choice for yourself. Every man is responsible for his own destiny. God has created us that way. And so He placed the tree. He gave the warning. And then He left man for his own choice.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone (Gen 2:18);

Now that is God's recognition of man's basic incompleteness by himself. God when He looked at man said,

It is not good that man should be alone (Gen 2:18);

Man is incomplete by himself. God said,

I will make a help meet for him. Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and he brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof (Gen 2:18-19).

Now imagine that. What a mind God must have given to Adam. As He brought to Adam all of the animals and everything and he said, "That's a cow, that's a horse, that's a dog, that's a cat".

And he named all of the animals, and all of the birds; but in all of the animal kingdom there wasn't found [a companion or] a help meet for Adam. And so the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and as he slept: he took one of his ribs (Gen 2:20-21),

Now just, He opened up his side and He took--and a rib is not probably quite correct here. There is another Hebrew word for rib and just what this particular Hebrew word means is ambiguous. We can't be sure, but God took something out of Adam, perhaps even a blood transfusion or maybe a cell, maybe God

cloned him. Who knows?

Interesting concept this cloning bit, realizing that the cell is far more complex than we originally thought, that there is the design pattern for the whole body in just a cell in your arm. So where this particular passage used to create a lot of problems to some of the problemed people, all of a sudden it looks like something out of science fiction that man has just about come to the place where we can clone, they think. And they're talking a lot today, in fact there is quite an interesting book that's created quite a controversy on cloning.

When God took out of Adam's side, and we'll say ribs just because we don't know what it is.

and he closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man (Gen 2:21-22).

Now as I said, this has caused a lot of problems. People say, well, they don't believe the Bible can be the Word of God because man has the same number of ribs that a woman has. Well, that sure isn't very logical thinking by the person who presents that kind of an argument; is it? Because say if you lost your arm in an accident, it doesn't mean your child is going to be born without an arm; does it? Or you've chopped a finger off, it doesn't mean if you have a little boy he's going to be missing his index finger. So if God took a rib out of Adam, it wouldn't mean that his child would be minus that rib. You'd have to go find Adam's skeleton someplace to see if there was a missing rib. You couldn't, you know, look at man today and say, well man has the same number and all because that would not follow. We know better than that.

But there is that deep intimate relationship between man and woman. So deep that,

Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: and she shall be called ishshah, because she was taken out of iysh. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Gen 2:23-25).

So now we have God establishing the basic relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. "Therefore a man shall leave his mother and father, and cleave unto his wife: and the two become one flesh." That's God's basic establishment of marriage. The two become one. The deepest, the most intimate bond, the two becoming one in marriage. The man cleaving to his wife. This is basic, this is the beginning of things, this is how God started it, this is how God intended it to be.

Now man had difficulty living up to God's plan and to God's intentions. When Jesus came, He sought to bring man to God's basic design and purpose; and thus, Jesus was teaching the sacredness of the marriage vows and the endurance of the marriage vows. And the Pharisees, recognizing now a difference between what Jesus was saying and what the law of Moses said, were seeking to trap Jesus, showing that He was teaching other than the law of Moses.

And so they said to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" And Jesus said, "If a man puts away his wife and marries another, except it be for fornication, he causes her to commit adultery and whoso marries her commits adultery". Oh ho ho, trap is shut. "How is it then that Moses said, Let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement". We caught You! You're saying something contrary to Moses' law. We know that God gave the law to Moses. There's no question about that. We've trapped You. We've caught You. You're contrary to Moses' law.

What did Jesus do? He went back and antedated Moses' law. Jesus said, "In the beginning it wasn't so. For in the beginning, God made them male and female, and for this cause shall a man leave his mother and father and shall cleave to his wife and they two become one flesh. And it was because of the hardness of your hearts that Moses said, Let him give her a writing of divorcement". Because man's heart was hard and would not come to God's divine ideal, the law of divorce was established but that was never God's original plan.

In the beginning it was not so. We've come back now to the beginning, that which Jesus came back to, the basic purposes of God in marriage. That once for life, a man leaving his mother and father cleaving to his wife and the two of them becoming one flesh. And because of the hardness of man's hearts, his inability to obtain or to obey God's best, we look at our society and our world today and we see the multitude of problems that have arisen out of the hardness of our hearts, leaving the basic beginning purposes of God in marriage.

There's something wrong today with our whole concept of love. I get so tired of hearing a husband or a wife say, "Well I never really loved them. I don't think I loved them. I don't think I ever loved them". Listen, if you don't love, don't get married. Where is your head? What are you thinking about? That's a terrible thing to say to your mate, "Well, I don't think I ever really loved you". It's tragic.

So there is--there's a basic problem in our whole dating system. And one of the basic problems of the whole dating system is the couples are getting deeply involved physically without even knowing each other emotionally. That is, in the true deep sense, the relationship is predicated too much upon the physical aspects and there's not enough just getting acquainted and knowing. You see, one of the characteristics of true love is that it is patient and it will wait for that God-ordained time.

And any guy that tries to hustle you along into bed before you're married doesn't really love you with the kind of love that you want your husband to love you. Get rid of him. That's the whole problem, you see. Couples are getting married without really knowing each other or without really loving each other because too much emphasis has been on the physical aspects which is not true love. True love will wait.

Beautiful openness in marriage, there should be. They were both naked, they weren't ashamed. They shouldn't be. The two are one flesh.

Chapter 3

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden (Gen 3:1)?

Now the serpent was not always what it is today. It didn't always writhe along on the ground. That is a part of the result of the curse--living in the dust, eating the dust. What its mode of propelling itself was we really don't know. Whether or not it was in erect position, whether or not it had even the capacity to fly, we really don't know. But Satan coming in the form of a serpent first of all questioned the Word of God. "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of all of the trees of the garden?"

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die (Gen 3:2-3).

Now that is Eve sort of interpreting or adding to what God said. God didn't say anything about not touching it. She's sort of adding to what God has said. God just said, "In the day that you shall eat of it, you will surely die." But God didn't say anything about not touching it.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die (Gen 3:4):

You see, first of all the questioning of the Word of God and then the second, challenging of the Word of God and this is always Satan's mode. The first thing that Satan does is he questions the Word of God. Satan is constantly seeking to create a question. Did God really say? Is that really God's word? And look at the attacks that Satan has brought against the Bible. "Hath God said?" Was it really God who said it? And he is constantly challenging the Word of God.

After challenging the Word of God, then he begins to question the Word of God. And then contradicts, "Ye shall not surely die." And then he begins his lie. Jesus said he is the "father of all lies". And this was the first lie, "Ye shall not surely die." That's a lie. That's deception. But you see, Eve didn't know evil, thus, she was deceived. The knowledge of good and evil didn't come until she ate the fruit. At this point all she knew is God said don't eat it. If you eat it, you will die. Now Satan is saying, You're not going to die.

For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes shall be open, and you will be as gods, knowing good from evil (Gen 3:5).

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And that God is trying to really to protect Himself. Now the idea in the second thing here is the challenging of God's fairness. You see, he challenges the Word of God and then he challenges the justice of God. God is under attack. His Word is under attack. His justice is under attack. God doesn't want you to eat it because He knows that when you do, you're going to be as wise, you're going to be as gods, like He is, knowing good from evil. He isn't fair with you. He's trying to hold back from you something that is worthwhile, something that's desirable. God isn't really playing fair with you. He's trying to hold back to protect Himself.

How often Satan is challenging the justice of God; how can a God of love do this? How can a God of love allow this and so forth, challenging the justice of the fairness of God?

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat (Gen 3:6).

Jesus said, "All that is in the world," or I guess John said, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Look at three: "lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, pride of life." Look how Satan hit her with a three-pronged attack. Lust of the flesh, was good to eat. The lust of the eye, it was pleasant to behold. The pride of life, a tree desired to make one wise as God. And so he hit her with a three-pronged attack, with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life; it was all there. And she ate. And she gave to Adam and he did eat.

Now the woman was deceived but Adam was not. Adam knew better. In the New Testament we are told that Adam--actually the woman was deceived, not Adam. That is, Adam knew what he was doing. Adam's was a deliberate willful choice against God's command; where the woman would had really been hoodwinked by Satan, she was deceived.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Gen 3:7).

Suddenly the lust of the flesh, having been given into, they became very conscious of the flesh. The beginning of man's body awareness, for in this action there was an inversion. God is a superior trinity, a Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Man made in the image and likeness of God was made an inferior trinity of spirit, soul and body. The real me is spirit. I live in a body. I possess a consciousness or a soul made in the image of God, of the triune God, Father, Son, Spirit. Man the inferior trinity; spirit, soul and body and man met God in the spirit level.

With man's spirit uppermost, there was a beautiful communion and fellowship with God. But when man obeyed the body appetites, eating of this tree, man became inverted and he became body, soul and spirit. The spirit now out of touch with God is dead. It has lost the awareness and consciousness of God. It's lying here dormant and the uppermost thing that now rules the mind of man is the body and the body needs. The desires of the flesh now rule over man.

So "every one of us," according to Paul, "in times past walked according to the desires of our flesh, according to the prince of the power of the air, that even now works in the children of disobedience; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:2-3). Because I was born in this inverted way, body, soul and spirit, my mind, my consciousness is now ruled as a natural man by the body appetites. It's all I think about. It dominates my mind.

Now Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, if you're going to enter the kingdom of heaven, you've got to be born again. You were born once after the flesh but you've got to be born again now of the Spirit"(John 3:5). There has got to be another inversion. And so being born again means that you are now born of the Spirit and there comes again this inversion to where once more, you come back into the original plan of God, where you are now once more spirit, soul and body, and the mind now in spiritual things.

They that are of the flesh do mind fleshly things, they that are of the Spirit do mind spiritual things. "The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit: neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 3:14). But the mind of the flesh is death. But the mind of the Spirit is life and joy and peace.

So my mind, my consciousness is ruled by either my body appetites, or by my Spirit. And when I am born again by the Spirit of God, the spirit becomes uppermost, my consciousness now is that of a God consciousness. And my spirit again ruling spirit, soul and body, I come back into fellowship with God. I am now alive in the spirit where I was once dead because of my trespasses and sins. But now God has made me alive again in the spiritual realm and it's a whole new life.

"The old things have passed away; everything becomes new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). I'm a new creature. A creature that is now spirit, soul and body, in fellowship with God and now the mind of the Spirit and the awareness of God and the desire and the longing for the things of the Spirit and the things of God. And your friends that you used to run around with don't know what's happened to you. You're not the same person you used to be. You bet you're not the same person you used to be. You've been born again.

You're a new creature in Christ Jesus. And they can't understand your new life. Because "the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit, neither can he know it." What seems to be so clear, so plain, so obvious to you is a dilemma and an enigma to him. And when you sit down to explain it, you just become

frustrated because he can't understand it. And yet it seems so obvious and so clear. Why? Because you have been born again of the Spirit. You now have a spiritual nature and you are alive and attuned to the things of the Spirit. "For he which is spiritual understands all things though he is not understood by any".

So here was the beginning of the inverted process where man in obeying the lust of his flesh became a servant to his flesh. He was now ruled by his flesh, and his mind was occupied by the needs and the desires of his flesh. And he came by, became by nature a child of wrath. And he remained that way until God made provisions through Jesus Christ for the process to be reversed.

Now it is interesting that it was by the tree that man lost his fellowship with God. The choice, free choice of the tree that man lost his fellowship with God. It is also interesting that you still have a free choice. And there are still two trees; the tree of life, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And we are always blaming Adam for making the wrong choice, but what about us? Who can we blame for the choices we make? God has provided again another tree; a tree whereby that which was lost by Adam's sin can be regained by our obedience.

The cross of Jesus Christ, the tree upon which He was crucified is the door that can lead a man back to God. But you must choose to come by that tree. God does not force you. Even as Adam exercised that capacity of free choice in eating of the tree going away from God, God has ordained that you must exercise that capacity of choice by partaking of that tree of life through Jesus Christ and coming into fellowship with God. It's your choice. But the provision is made through the second tree, the cross of Jesus Christ to reverse the process of Adam.

Now they heard the voice of the LORD God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden (Gen 3:8).

Notice now, it isn't God hiding Himself, it isn't God removing Himself, it's man removing Himself from God. God said, "My hand is not heavy, that I cannot save; my ear is not heavy, that I cannot hear: Your sins have separated between you and God" (Isaiah 59:1-2). Here we find the beginning of it. Man hid himself from the presence or sought to hide himself from God.

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou (Gen 3:9)?

Not that God didn't know. He wanted man to recognize it and confess it.

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said unto him, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree, that I commanded you that you should not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat (Gen 3:10-12).

This is the beginning of buck passing. As Genesis, the book of beginnings, the first excuse. The first wife to get blamed for the husband's problems, not the last. Blaming his problems upon his wife. "The woman that You gave me." In a real technical sense, he's blaming God. You're the One that gave her to me. Cheerful. "The woman that Thou gavest me to be my wife, she did give to me, and I did eat."

And the LORD God said unto the woman, What have you done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat (Gen 3:13).

Passing it on down. And so now God's judgment upon man.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent (Gen 3:14),

And first of all, it begins where it ended. It begins with the serpent. The buck was passed to him so God starts there.

Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; and upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life (Gen 3:14):

So it's movement now upon its belly is a result of the curse of God. "Cursed above all cattle and every beast."

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen 3:15).

Herein is the first promise of God for salvation that shall come. And the hint is that the salvation will come through a virgin born child. For God is speaking of the woman's seed which she does not have. The woman has an egg that is fertilized by the male seed. But God speaking of the woman's seed is indicating and hinting of a virgin birth. Later God speaks of it more clearly in Isaiah, "Behold, I shall give you a sign, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, call his name Immanuel, which means, God with us. And he shall be great" (Isaiah 7:14). And it speaks about His kingdom and His throne.

And so God's promise back at the beginning of the sorrows and the calamity from sin is that the day will come when the woman's seed will bruise the serpent's head. The head always being spiritually a symbol of authority and power. The seed of the woman to destroy Satan's power, the authority of Satan. And so Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of Satan over our lives and the authority of Satan over our lives.

However, "thou shalt bruise his heel," a reference no doubt to the cross of Jesus Christ.

And unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception (Gen 3:16);

Notice how that God immediately associates sorrow with sin. Satan had associated pleasure with sin. Satan still associates pleasure with sin. The enticement into sin is usually held up as a pleasurable experience. Something to be desired as the fruit was a tree to be desired. And so sin looks very desirable. Satan always paints it in very beautiful colors as something that is good, something that is pleasurable, something that is desirable.

But though he may paint it in these colors, God paints it in its true colors. The true result is sorrow, not pleasure. So God immediately begins to equate the sorrow that shall come. Sorrow in thy conception.

in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life (Gen 3:16-17);

This is different from dressing the garden and keeping the garden that God had given. Now in sorrow he is to take his bread out of the ground.

Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the vegetables of the field; And in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen 3:18-19).

So your days are going to be filled with sorrow and sweat as you take your bread out of the ground that is cursed because of what you have done. The thorns and the thistles will come forth. They say that a thorn is an undeveloped blossom, thorns and thistles stunted development. What a picture it is of the result of sin. How sin stunts our real development in our relationship with God.

To me it is quite significant. Jesus who came, who is God's ordained King over the world, King really over the universe, King of kings and Lord of lords; Jesus, God's ordained King when He came was crowned with a crown of thorns. Where did the thorns come from? The curse of sin. He who came to bear our sin wore a crown of thorns representing the curse of sin. When you realize the mission of Christ at His first coming, nothing could be more fitting than a crown of thorns. When He comes again, it will be with a golden diadem to rule and to reign over the earth.

And so God's curse upon the serpent, upon the woman, upon the man, upon the ground. And that is why Paul the apostle teaches us that "all creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22,23). The whole creation groans because of the curse of sin in the world today, waiting for that day when Jesus redeems that which He purchased when He died on the cross.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and He clothed them (Gen 3:20-21).

They sewed together fig leaves showing an endeavor by their own works to cover their guilt. It was not sufficient. God gave to them coats of skin showing that the covering of guilt must come by way of sacrifice. For the animals had to be slain by God for Him to give to them the coats of skin. And thus was the beginning of the concept of sacrifice and the shedding of blood for sins. Later God spells it out very definitely and clearly saying, "For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22).

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen 3:22-24).

Now the curse had come. Sorrow from sin. Getting your bread with the sweat of your brow. Man would be foolish enough and stupid enough to run back into the garden and grab the fruit of the tree of life so he could go on in this miserable condition. To save God, to save man from himself in his own folly, God drove him out of the garden and put the Cherubims to guard the way lest man would return and eat of that tree of life and live in this miserable sorrowful condition, because God wants us to live on an earth which is renewed, under the authority and power of Jesus Christ. And it is in that world that sorrow is gone and sin is gone that we will live and reign with Him.

But God had to protect man from him, from himself. The Cherubim there is not really as the judgment of God. It's the protection of God as God protects man against his own folly. It would be horrible to go on

living forever in these corrupted bodies as the result of sin, and in this corrupted world that has been corrupted by sin. And so God protected man. But ultimately God transplanted that tree of life and now it is in the midst of the paradise of God. And Jesus said to those in Ephesus, "To him that overcometh will I grant to be with me in my kingdom and he shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

And we are told of the tree that grows on either side of the river in heaven with twelve manners of fruit and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. There's a lot about horticulture that we do not know. There's a lot about our bodies that we do not know. A lot of interesting things in store for us as we follow after Jesus Christ who will bring us into that age where sin and its resultant curse and sorrow will be removed. Where we might live in a world that God intended to begin with, a world that is ruled by Jesus Christ in righteousness and in peace. A world that will rule that will not be governed by greedy men and destroyed by the greed of man, but rather living together in beautiful harmony. The whole realm of commerce will be done away.

Oh everyone that thirsteth come ye in and drink. Eat bread without money. The whole thing freely again receiving, just dressing the garden that God creates. So that which was wrought by Adam's fall, the potential of restoration is in Jesus Christ and those that are in Christ shall enter into the kingdom and we will live and reign with Him forever. But it's your choice. You don't have to.

Now the other place that God has prepared is not so comfortable. He really didn't prepare it for man. But you have the choice if you want to go there. He won't stop you. He'll try. But if He would stop you then the fact that He gave you choice would be meaningless. So ultimately you can be stubborn and resist every endeavor of God to stop you and you can end up there. But you can't blame God for your being there. He has done everything short of forcing your will to have you a part of His kingdom. But it's your choice. It's an awesome choice. It's a choice each of us make for ourselves. It's an inescapable choice.

Father, we thank You for Your love and for Your Holy Spirit who has come to reveal Thy love to us. We thank You, Lord, for the power of choice though sometimes we are almost frightened by its awesomeness. And we realize the capacity that we have in choosing eternal destiny. But we thank You Lord in the midst of it that we find that You have also made choices. And we thank You Lord that You have chosen us and ordained us that we should be Your disciples and that we should bring forth fruit and that our fruit should remain. Lord, we pray that Your Holy Spirit will help us as we seek to understand more fully Your plan and Your purposes. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now we went twice as far as we did last Sunday night. Next Sunday night we'll begin with chapter four. We're not getting on that now. Just read, you know, on down the line. We're not even going to announce how far we're going to go, we'll just start with chapter four and we'll go until we come to a decent quitting point.

God bless you, fill your heart with an understanding of His love. Fill your life with the fullness of His Spirit. May He watch over you and keep you. And may the good hand of our Lord be upon you to bless you and prosper you in His way as you walk with Him in Jesus' name.

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