

### 3. The Early Earth

**Biblical material:** Genesis 2.

#### Quotes

- In Genesis, it says that it is not good for a man to be alone; but sometimes it is a great relief. *John Barrymore*
- Look at the evidence: In chapter two of Genesis, God gives Eve to Adam as an intellectual and physical helpmate. *Marvin Olasky*
- We only half live when we only half think. *Voltaire*

#### Questions

Why is the story of how human beings were formed important? How would we view ourselves without the data in Genesis? What of the view that here in Genesis we have various mythological accounts combined? How does God come across in the account of man's creation? Why does God plant the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What of the garden setting?

#### Discussion

The description of how God formed the first human being is essential. It reveals that God animates the physical and gives life, but says nothing about an inanimate soul. As other texts demonstrate, at death this breath of life simply returns to God who gave it. No conscious soul or spiritual entity lives on. When you think of how much confusion there is over such ideas, and how the vast majority see things differently, you realize how a correct understanding is so important, especially as we look at how things began.

Add to that a clear and careful reading of the creation of Eve helps avoid misconceptions in gender issues and the role of wives etc. The idea that Eve was a "helpmeet" (old English for fitting or appropriate help) for Adam ensures that the first couple is seen as mutually supportive and complementary.

God's placing of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden seems either provocative or unnecessary to some. But from a different perspective it can be understood as well demonstrating the openness of God and his respect for his created beings. By providing this one place where the Accuser could speak with Adam and Eve, he safeguarded Satan's freedom of speech, while by having just one location he protected Adam and Eve's privacy and right to live in peace, undisturbed by a persistent Enemy. Similarly he upheld Adam and Eve's right to know and be exposed to differing viewpoints, if they so chose. This respect for religious liberty and freedom of conscience speaks so well of a God who considers freedom essential to his universe.

Why was it not good for man to be alone, when God had already pronounced all of creation very good? Does the idea of "incompleteness" mean "imperfection"? The complementarity of Eve demonstrates the dynamic nature of God's universe, and that learning, experience, even truth, is developmental. The new dimension of Eve for Adam leads to exhilaration and delight, and shows that while he was "perfect" before, he is "more perfect" now! In the same way we too develop and grow, and look forward to that process continuing

throughout eternity. It will be our privilege to examine all of God's acts from eternity past to eternity future. How good God looks in such an understanding of his universe!

### **Comment**

"The events of creation week were very public. We weren't there. We came as visitors on Friday. The universe was watching, and we rightly ask, 'What did they learn? How did they react? Were any answers given to the charges of Satan in the great controversy?' ...All God asks of His children is trust... Imagine you are watching days one, two, three, four, five, six and then seven. Do you see any answers there to Satan's charges? Do you see any evidence there that God really can be trusted? Remember the charges developed through Scripture are that God is arbitrary; He is not respectful of the freedom of His children; He is vengeful, exacting, unforgiving, and severe; He cannot even be depended upon to tell the truth. Is that answered during creation week? What could you point to as answers? You are watching. Day one, two. Sometimes we wonder why He took so long. He could have created the world with a snap of His fingers, couldn't He? Has He always taken that long to create each of the billions and billions of worlds? Or because the controversy has begun, the charges have been laid, and a third of the angels have accepted them as true, might this be the background for God doing what He did? No one was hurrying Him during creation week. With great majesty and unhurried drama, God unfolded His plan for our world. Day one. 'Let there be light.' Day two, three, four. Day five the world is a beautiful place. God doesn't look very selfish by Thursday evening. What a beautiful place He's planned for the people that He will permit to dwell there.

"And then on Friday He creates the first man and the first woman. Why do you think He made us male and female? It's caused all kinds of complications ever since, hasn't it? Why do you think He did this? It seems to me one of the most wonderful things God ever did, was to share as much of His creative power with us mere humans as He possibly could. A selfish God? Abusing His divine power and selfishly using it? See, Satan wants to be like God, to be a creator-god. What better way could there be, than for God to create us male and female, with the amazing arrangement, that when a man and a woman come together in love, they have the power to create little people in their own image..

"And then what about respect for freedom? Did God create us capable of loving Him and trusting Him, or of hating Him and spitting in His face? We know we can do that; it's been done. He created us free. But what must have taken the breath of the angels away was His placing of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden, where Satan could approach them. Think what that says about freedom. But He didn't let Satan tempt them more than they were able to bear, so He advised Adam and Eve in their inexperience not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. He said, 'Don't go near the tree.' Often we see that as a test of obedience. I think it's rather a protection. That was to protect them. And Eve showed they weren't ready. She went over to the tree and was deceived by that messenger, that 'angel of light,' the deceiver." *A. Graham Maxwell, Tape "Genesis" (Riverside).*

### **Ellen White Comments**

In the beginning, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." But sin has almost obliterated the moral image of God in man. Jesus came down to our world that He might give man a living example, that he might know how to live and how to keep the way of the Lord. He was the image of the Father. His beautiful and spotless character is before man as an example for him to imitate. We must study the copy and follow Jesus Christ, then we shall bring

His loveliness and beauty into our character. In doing this we are standing before God through faith, winning back by conflict with the powers of darkness the power of self-control, the love of God that Adam lost. {1SAT 33-4}

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