

**Genesis 2.4-25**  
**THE CREATION ACCOUNT ELUCIDATED**  
12 January 2023  
New International Version, 2011

**Learning objectives**

- We shall reconcile the 'two' creation accounts.
- We shall inventory human needs that God meets.
- We shall affirm monogamous, man-woman marriage.

**2:4 Brief Summary**

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

Account: tôledôt, 1 origins. 2 generations (root=to beget).

LORD God: Yahweh Elohim with singular verbs. Why two divine names together?

When he made: in-(the)-day (of) make earth and heaven.

**2:5-6 Conditions of the early earth**

Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.

Grammar: The word order (conj + subj + pred) = disjunctive clause = background info for the narrative.

Logic: How does verse 6 elucidate on 1:2, 9? Or is it a contradiction?

Query: How do 'shrub' and 'plant' differ in this context?

**Main types of Hebrew narrative sentence**

1:1, 2:4 Declarative: No conjunction, adverb + verb + subject + predicate. Summary statement.

1:2, 2:5-6 Disjunctive: Conjunction (waw) + adverb + verb + subject + predicate. Background: 'Now, ...'

1:3, 2:7 Consecutive: Conjunction (waw) + imperfect verb + subject + predicate. Narrative sequential action: 'And / next / then'

Note: The prefixed waw (ו) = new sentence marker.

**2:7 Yahweh creates humankind**

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Formed: ytsr, to fashion (by design).

Dust of the ground: 'afal 'from the' 'adamah.

Breath of life: *nishmat khayyim*, 2:7 and 7:22, elsewhere *ruakh khayyim*. 'To life!' *l'khayyim*

Living being: a live *nefeš* used both of humans and of beasts.

### Interpretive queries

- Does Genesis 2:7 imply anything more than a special creative act for human beings?
- Does 'breath of life' imply anything about human beings in contrast with other living beings?
- Does 'living being', which is used of both human beings and beasts, imply anything about divine purpose for other creatures?
- Does 'dust of the ground' imply anything about 'divine beings' (gods & angels)?

### 2:8-9 Adam amongst the tree of an orchard

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground —trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- Trees for food: Material survival?
- Tree of life: Immaterial *khayyîm*?
- Tree of knowledge: 'Good and/or evil', the ultimate descriptors of every human's everlasting outcome?

### True Myth

- Myths express, in story form, a community's beliefs, values, fears, hopes, affirming its authorities, condemning its enemies, recounting origins.
- God communicated with his creatures in their language, in their social structure, in their cultural categories, and in their worldview, affirming their good, correcting their errors, and condemning their evil.
- The Hebrew Scriptures consist in 'true myth', that is, divine truth and ultimate reality, expressed in forms and terms that ancient societies could understand.

### Modern Mythologies

- Scientism: '2 the belief that the assumptions, methods of research, etc., of the physical and biological sciences are equally appropriate and essential to all other disciplines, including the humanities and the social sciences.' [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)
- Creationism: '1 the doctrine that matter and all things were created, substantially as they now exist, by an omnipotent Creator, and not gradually evolved or developed.' [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)
- Demythologize: '3 to separate mythological, legendary, or apocryphal elements from a writing, work of art, historical figure, etc.' [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

### 2:10-12 Water, gold, medication, minerals

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)

Possible geography for the Pishon and the Gihon have been identified via topographical photographs. Elements of human society: ● Water for agriculture, ● Gold for value in trade, ● Medication for health, ● Minerals for industry.

### **2:13-14 Major rivers**

The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

All ancient and modern civilizations arose along major rivers, which provide water (doh!), fish, transport, trade, boundaries, security, religion, and burial.

### **2:15-17 The Garden of Luxuries**

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

In antiquity, it was kings who dwelt in luxurious gardens.

2:8 Put: *šayem*, 'to set, put, stand'.

2:15 Put: *nawah*, 'to give rest, leave in place'.

Work it: Not to labour on soil, until after the fall.

Query: How did Adam know what it is to die?

Work: Pagan myths taught that the gods made humans to serve them.

Must not: Just how stingy is God?

Hebrew: "Good and evil / good or evil".

Query: How could God ensure that his creatures sin, without causing them to do so?

### **2:18 It is not good for the man to be alone.**

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Not good: Why not? See 1:27 & 28.

Helper: *‘ezer*, help. Homonym: warrior.

Make: See 1:26.

For him: *k<sup>e</sup>-neged*, literally, 'as (his) opposite, correspondent, vis-à-vis. Perhaps 'equal' or 'mate'.

### **2:19-20a Adam names other creatures**

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

Query: What does naming imply in its biblical usage?

### **2:20b-22 Yahweh made a woman.**

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Rib: Or 'side'.

Made: *banah*, to build, to construct.

### **2:23 Man and woman**

The man said,  
"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,'  
for she was taken out of man."

Query: Did Adam claim rulership over the woman?

Query: How do 'man and woman' correspond to 'male and female' (1:27)?

Query: How does gender correspond to sex?

Query: Can women hold church offices?

### **2:24-25 Marriage**

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Query: Who said or wrote, 'That is why...'?

Query: Was ancient Hebrew society matrilineal ('residence with the wife's family or tribe' dictionary.com)?

Query: Were they created pubescent?

Query: How many wives? How many at a time? How many concubines?

Query: What did Jesus say about this passage? (Mark 10:2-9)