

## 10. GENESIS SERIES: The Garden of Eden

‘And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and 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. And Adam 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. 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 (Genesis 2:18-25).’

In this chapter of Genesis, especially the passage now under consideration, we are looking with more detail at the creation of man and now that especially of the woman. Throughout this chapter we have been discovering new information regarding the creation of man that was not given in the more general description of creation in chapter 1.

**NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE:** What did it mean for Adam to have a ‘help meet?’

**Verse 18:** Back in Genesis 1:31 God described his work of creation at the end of day six to be ‘very good.’ Yet here in Genesis 2:18, which occurred on day six, you have God describing man being alone as being ‘not good.’ Is there some sort of a contradiction here? Well the answer is fairly obvious, the ‘not good’ situation is obviously removed before the close of day six with the provision of the woman for Adam, thereby becoming ‘very good.’

The completion of creation regarding man required the creation of a woman to compliment the man, whereby the command given to man could actually be fulfilled. How could man possibly obey God in being fruitful and filling the earth without the capacity to reproduce. This realisation helps in understanding how the situation for Adam was ‘not good’ in at least one area. It doesn’t mean that man was created with flaws.

A ‘help meet’ for Adam meant someone who was his compliment, not just in the propagation of the species, but also as someone with whom to relate in a more general sense, someone with whom he could share his life.

John Calvin said:

‘But although God pronounced, concerning Adam, that it would not be profitable for him to be alone, yet I do not restrict the declaration to his person alone, but rather regard it as a common law of man’s vocation, so that every one ought to receive it as said to himself, that solitude is

not good, excepting only him whom God exempts as by a special privilege.'

**QUESTION:** How has the original intention of Adam and his 'help meet' been affected by the Fall? Describe what the man-woman relationship pre-fall must have been like?

**Verse 19:** Here we have further information regarding the origins of the various creatures of the earth. Having been created they are brought to man in order to be named by man. Here was Adam's first 'job' in Eden, the naming of all the creatures that God brought to him for that very purpose. Adam was required to study these creatures and to give them appropriate names.

Is this passage out of place here? God has just spoken of how it was 'not good' for man to be alone and that he would therefore make him a 'help meet,' yet instead we see the creatures of the earth coming to Adam in order to be named. Perhaps the reason for this is to further show just how 'not good' it was for man to be alone and that a real need existed for man to have a help meet.

You also have in this passage a little more information on the creation of the earth's creatures. This verse tells us that they were created 'out of the ground,' there not being a single shred of evolution in this verse at all.

**Verse 20:** Having named the various creatures that came to him it quickly became obvious to Adam that there was no partner for him, though he had undoubtedly seen that each of the creatures had partners or a corresponding partner of the opposite sex. He was alone, without anyone that he could realistically share his life with or with whom he would be able to reproduce and propagate his kind. Though a social creature created in the Image of God, there was no corresponding creature with whom he was able to relate. This was clearly 'not good.'

**QUESTION:** When the woman finally appeared on the scene, did Adam's experience of naming the animals' influence his opinion of the woman that God had provided for him? Explain.

**Verse 21:** With man's need now clearly revealed to Adam, God puts Adam asleep in order to create a 'help meet' for him from out of Adam himself. The translation we have suggests that a rib was taken for this purpose, yet that is not what the original language says. God opened Adam's side and part of Adam's side was used in the creation of the woman. Where this 'surgery' took place, God provided immediate healing.

**Verse 22:** Though we have been speaking about the 'creation' of the woman from out of the man (1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tim 2:13), our text actually uses a word that should be translated as 'built.' In other words, God actually built a 'help meet' for Adam from the human material taken from Adam while he was asleep.

Once the building process was completed, God actually brought the 'help meet' to Adam, as He had brought the other creatures to him for naming.

**QUESTION:** What is the significance of God bringing the woman to Adam? How then should the man view his wife?

**Verse 23:** With the arrival of his 'help meet,' Adam examines her in order to name her, as he had named the other creatures brought to him by God for naming. At the conclusion of his investigation Adam is certain of the appropriate name and names her 'woman.' The reason is very simple - she was made out of material taken from him.

**Verse 24:** This verse explains the place of human marriage in the relationship between a man and a woman. It would seem to be God's pronouncement by the pen of Moses on the relationship he brought about between Adam and Eve, and for all humanity thereafter.

By coming together in marriage, the man and woman became 'one flesh.'

**QUESTIONS:** What does it mean for a man and a woman to become 'one flesh?'

Does 'one flesh' have any implications for polygamy and divorce?

**Verse 25:** In the garden there was no sin at this time. There was not in existence any evil thoughts, or the perversion of sexuality and human nudity. This is why the man and the woman are described as being without shame, even though they were both naked. They saw in each other the provision of God for the propagation of the species, God's provision for human fellowship, etc. There was no need for shame (which they knew nothing of), only a contentedness in God's goodness to them. Indeed, all that God had created was very good.

## **INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY**

What sins were committed in the Garden of Eden by our first parents?

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