

LESSON 2

DIVINE PURPOSE AND HUMAN FAILURE

Genesis 2:5—4:26

Aim

To understand the purpose for which man was created and the tragedy of his disobedience to God's commands.

Introduction

Genesis 2 is referred to frequently as the second creation story. Advocates of the Documentary Hypothesis¹ conclude that Genesis 2 was taken from a J (Jehovist) source and failed to be completely integrated with the P (Priestly) source of Genesis 1 which refers to God as Elohim. Genesis 2:4 uses the name Yahweh Elohim (Lord God) and has been designated as the J strand by German theologians. The documentary theorists propose that creation stories from two strands or sources have been put together in Genesis 1 and 2. The differences between the two accounts have been emphasized:

1. The first account presents the original state of the earth as a watery chaos, but the second presents it as a waterless waste without vegetation.
2. The first divides creation into six separate activities with each assigned to a day, but the second account makes no note of time.
3. Order of creation:

Second Account (Gen. 2:5-24)

- (1) man made from the dust with the breath of Yahweh
- (2) paradise to the east in Eden
- (3) trees of every kind including the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- (4) animals, beasts, and birds (no mention of fish)
- (5) woman created out of man

First Account (Gen. 1:1-2:4)

- (1) light
- (2) the firmament
- (3) the dry land and the separation of the earth and sea; vegetation
- (4) the heavenly bodies— sun, moon, and stars
- (5) birds and fish
- (6) animals and mankind, male and female

A closer examination reveals that the first account in Genesis 1 emphasizes that God is Creator and that man is a part of His creation. The second account in chapter 2 gives an altogether different emphasis: man is the centre of the account of creation, and the creation of the garden, trees, animals, and woman is in relation to man. The second account is not a clumsy failure of the author to reconcile two creation accounts, but it is an explanation

¹ Critical scholars have argued that the Pentateuch is a composite of four original documents: the J document was written about 850 B. C. by a prophet of Judah in which *Jehovah* is the name of the deity; the E document was written about 750 B. C. by a prophet of Ephraim who used *Elohim* as the name of the deity until Exodus 3; the D document pertains to *Deuteronomy* and the following historical books; and the P material refers to a *priestly* writer who composed the legal sections and the history bound up with the laws. The Pentateuch was placed in its final form about 500 B. C. in Judah. See Weldon E. Viertel, *The Bible and Its Interpretation* (El Paso, Tex.: Carib Baptist Publications, 1973), pp. 53ff.

Critical scholars propose the theory that Genesis 1 and 2 are from _____ distinct sources.
(two)

Three differences in the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 which the theorists emphasize are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Draw lines to make correct statements.

1. The first creation account
2. The second creation account
 - a. emphasizes man in relation to God and His plan.
 - b. presents man in relation to the created world.

(1-b; 2-a)

of man's purpose in God's design for creation. The first account presents man in relation to the created world; the second account emphasizes man in relation to God and His plan. The second account lays the foundation for understanding the tragedy of man's disobedience and separation from God as recorded in chapter 3.

God' Design for Man

Genesis 2:5-25

Man's relation to material creation (vv. 5-6)

Verse 5 gives emphasis to the fact that God is Creator and Sustainer of man. In the beginning, there was no plant life, rain, nor man to cultivate the ground. With man the centre of attention, the author then spoke of God's forming him from the dust of the ground. Man's body is from created matter; therefore, he is related to the rest of material creation. The Hebrew word for ground is *adamah* and man is *adam*. Man was made a living creature along with other animals (see 2:7, 19 and 1:20).

Man's distinction from material creation (v. 7)

God is pictured as shaping man personally and carefully as the potter does a vessel of clay. God's personally breathing into man the breath of life distinguishes him from the rest of living beings. This direct and intense involvement of God in the creation of man indicates a lofty destiny for man who has both earthly and heavenly natures.

God's provision for man (vv. 8-15)

The Garden of Eden or "Paradise of Delight" cannot be located. The third river, Hiddekel, is the Tigris and the fourth is the Euphrates. but the point at which they divided is unknown.

Genesis is not concerned with when God planted a garden but why—for man's use. The particular characteristics which made it a place of paradisiacal existence for man to live in fellowship with God are emphasized. The Garden of Eden included not only trees for beauty and food but also the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life implies that eternal life is not inherent to man but available to him on the condition of his continuing in fellowship with God. God provided for the continuation of his life by giving him access to the tree of life until he sinned and was separated from it. The tree of knowledge of good and evil involves more than intellectual perception; it includes experience. In order to be endowed with spiritual life in the image of God, man was given freedom to make decisions. As soon as man began exercising his dominion over creation, he became involved in the experience of doing right with the possibility of doing wrong. He was given authority over creation but was not liberated from the responsibility of doing right and being dependent on his Creator. As Creator, God placed some restrictions on man, thus limiting his freedom.

God's command to man (vv. 16-17)

The freedom to decide and act involves moral responsibility. Man as creature is subject to and responsible to his Creator. He is a social creature and must respect the rights of his fellow-man. Restrictions are placed on him at the point of his relation to his God and to his fellow-man. He has been given dominion over animal and plant life to use for his livelihood, but he has not been given dominion over his fellow-man nor equality with his Creator. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the garden to teach man that although he has great freedom he also has restrictions and moral responsibilities. He could eat freely of every tree of the garden except one. To demand complete freedom and independence from his Creator leads to spiritual and physical death.

Read. Genesis 2:7.

Man is related to the rest of _____
creation since his body is from crea-
ted _____.

(material, matter)

God's breathing into man the breath of life dis-
tinguishes him from other _____

(living beings)

The Garden of Eden was located in the general area
of the _____ and _____ rivers.

(Tigris, Euphrates)

Man had access to the tree of life until

(he sinned)

The tree of knowledge signified man's freedom of
choice to experience doing _____ or _____.

(right, wrong)

Provision for man's companionship (vv. 18-25)

Plant and animal creation provided for man's physical needs but not for his social needs. He was lonely and needed a companion. God determined to make a helper suitable for him.

When God made woman she was not taken from his head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be an equal with him.²

Verses 24 and 25 set forth several important teachings concerning marriage. Monogamy (one mate) is implied in verse 24. A man is responsible to his father and mother until he chooses a wife. Then his primary responsibility changes from his parents to his companion. He is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. The Scripture makes clear that the relationship of husband and wife is the strongest of all human relationship and is indissoluble. The fact that they were naked and not ashamed implies their innocence and holy relationship.

Man's Temptation, Fall, and Punishment

Genesis 3:1-4:26

Temptation and disobedience (3:1-6)

Genesis 3 is classified by literal scholars as a collection of myths but by conservative scholars as historical facts. In either case, the chapter is filled with rich and deep theological symbolism.

The serpent is the instrument of temptation. His cunning character lends itself to the subtle and deceitful nature of temptation. Early Babylonian literature reveals that dragons and serpents were thought to inhabit the *Tehom* (deep) and to be the embodiment of evil. Subtle means crafty and shrewd. Shrewdness involves intelligence devoted to evil purposes. A serpent suggests skillfulness in a deceitful purposes.

The prohibited fruit symbolizes all kinds of temptation. The temptation of Eve is repeated in the life of every person. Basic to the kinds of temptation is the command of God limiting man's freedom. In the nature of man is the element of pride concerning his superiority to other living creatures and the potential perversion of man's understanding of himself in relation to creation and to the Creator. Since man has been endowed with much freedom and superiority over creation, he is tempted to demand complete freedom and, in pride, conceive of himself as equal with his Creator.

The tempter's words show a three-step progression. (1) "Did God really say" insinuates that God is unfair to limit man's freedom and to keep back anything from man. The contemporary suggestion might be, "A loving God does not forbid pleasure." (2) The next step is to question the integrity of God. The serpent stated, "You shall not surely die." A contemporary rationalization might be, "The commandments tell me not to do this, but it will not hurt to do it just once." (3) The final step attacks the motives of God by accusing Him of selfishness in preventing man from being equal with Himself, knowing good and evil. The temptation appeals to the attitude of pride. Man wants to be independent and superior to all existence. His most difficult problem is to admit that he is wrong and dependent. Perhaps the widespread failure of man to recognize that he is a creature who should worship his Creator grows out of his proud attitude that he is free and subject to no one.

² Quoted by Ralph H. Elliott, *The Message of Genesis* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), p. 46.

Is this true or false?

Even though he had the privilege of making decisions, man had the responsibility of doing right and being dependent on his Creator. _____

(True)

Man's demand of complete freedom and independence from his Creator leads to _____ and _____ death.

(spiritual, physical)

Genesis 2:24 implies monogamy, which means _____

(a man should have only one wife)

At the time of marriage a man's primary responsibility changes from his _____ to his _____

(parents, wife)

The temptation to take the forbidden fruit shows sinful attitudes of _____, _____ of man's understanding of his relation to creation and his Creator, and desire for complete _____

(pride, perversion, freedom)

How many progressive steps were there in Eve's temptation? _____

(Three)

Beside each step, write a parallel idea in our day.

1. Belief that God is unfair _____ in limiting man's freedom _____

2. Questioning of integrity _____ of God _____

3. Accusing God of selfish- _____ ness in preventing man _____ from being equal with _____ Himself

(compare your answer with the text.)

Representative sins which appeal to every man are embodied in the encounter. The appeals are made to natural desires which become perverted and sinful when not limited to the sphere for which God designed them. An appeal to the natural hunger instinct ("good for food"), an appeal to vanity ("pleasant to the eyes"), and an appeal to pride ("ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil") were included in the temptation. The tempter promised greater knowledge and power through the experience of evil. First John 2:16 states the same three-fold appeal of sin in the words "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

Satan won a double victory. Eve yielded to the temptation of the serpent and in turn became the instrument of temptation for Adam. However, the commandment of God had been given directly to Adam, and it was he who made the choice that determined the destiny of all mankind (cf. Rom. 5:12).

The consequences of sin (3:7-4:26)

The spiritual consequences (3:7-13).—The knowledge of evil, involving inner guilt and shame, became an experiential reality when Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit. The awareness of their nakedness and the attempt to cover themselves were symbols of their guilt which resulted from their disobedience. Because of their guilt, they could not face God. They attempted to avoid Him by hiding. This is the experience of every man. Even though he may rationalize to justify his activities, inwardly he knows that he is sinful and unacceptable to God. To escape the inner tension caused by guilt, man denies often the existence of God who requires responsibility and obedience.

Because of sinful pride, man normally rationalizes in an attempt to justify his own actions while pointing a finger of accusation at others. Adam blamed Eve directly; he blamed God indirectly by accusing God of having given him a companion who caused him to stumble. The woman was honest enough to admit that she had been deceived, but she passed the blame on to the serpent.

The physical consequences (3:14-24).—Man's environment, the natural order, was adjusted to correspond with his direction in life. Opinions are divided whether the serpent had walked upright before the sin and was reduced to crawling as punishment, or whether he was sentenced to continue to crawl on his belly and to eat dust. The woman was punished with painful and difficult childbirth and with subjection to her husband who would dominate her. In countries without the influence of Christianity, that domination is often tyrannical. Man's punishment also involved a curse upon the soil. Work had not been a curse nor a distasteful chore before the act of disobedience. Sin brought disharmony to God's creation, and man must toil in the midst of natural disorder to earn a livelihood. The severest punishment came in the expulsion from the garden. Man was cut off from the tree of life and must experience physical as well as spiritual death for his sins. He was destined to a life of struggle, and he lost the relation of perfect fellowship with God.

The sociological consequences (4:1-15, 25-26).—Chapter 3 pictures the impairment of man's relationship with God. Chapter 4 portrays the marring of social relationships caused by sin. Man sinned against God in chapter 3; he sinned against his fellow-man in chapter 4.

Eve looked upon Cain, her first-born son, as a gift from God. He was a tiller of the ground. His brother Abel was a keeper of flocks. There is no indication in the Scriptures that any requirements for offerings in worship had been given at that time; however, Cain brought of his harvest of the field and Abel brought the firstlings of his flock. Opinions differ concerning the

First John 2:16 describes the same three-fold appeal of sin which Adam and Eve experienced in these words"

_____,
_____, _____ "

(Read 1 John 2:16 again to confirm your answer.)

After Adam sinned, he attempted to _____
_____ from God.

(hide)

Because of sin everyone experiences

_____ from God.

(separation)

Physical consequences of sin were:

<i>For woman</i>	<i>For man</i>
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
<i>For both:</i> _____	

(1. Painful childbirth 1. Curse upon the soil

2. Subjection to her 2. Toil in the midst of
 husband natural disorder

Expulsion from the Garden)

Cite the scripture reference which shows that Cain was angry at God before he killed his brother Abel.

(Genesis 4:5)

reason Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's rejected by the Lord. Hebrews 11:4 says that Abel made an offering in faith. The fact that Abel brought the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions, may indicate that his attitude was different from Cain's. Abel chose very carefully the first of his flock to offer to God. Cain simply made an offering. He may have given grudgingly. No explanation is given as to why one offering was approved and the other rejected.

Cain's reaction towards God was expressed in his anger towards his brother and indicated that his heart was not right; otherwise, he would have sought the source of his difficulty. The wild beast of hatred within him sprang upon his brother and murdered him. Unless sin is taken to God and confessed, it lies at the door of man's heart and eventually takes control.

Cain's actions cannot be justified, but they can be understood. His parents had sinned before him, and he inherited their nature. When Cain was confronted with the guilt of his brother's blood, he answered, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (v. 9). Man's freedom to make his own decisions does not exempt him from responsibility for his fellow-man. Man's freedom is limited by the needs and rights of his brother. No man can live unto himself. God has so ordained that proper social relationship involves one's fellow-man. To go one's own way and ignore the needs of his brother or to hinder or wrong him is to sin against God by breaking His commandments.

Sin against one's fellow-man cannot go unpunished. Cain was sentenced to cultivate unfruitful ground. Cain discovered a second penalty for sin is man's being shut away from the presence of God (v. 14).

The punishment of sin is tempered by the mercy of God. Cain made a plea to God for help, and God responded by placing a mark of protection on him. The mark was not a curse but a sign of God's protection: "If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold" (v. 15, RSV). This action reminds us of Paul's words in Romans 5:8 concerning God's expression of love for us while we were sinners.

The descendants of Cain (4:16-24)

The land of Nod has not been located geographically. The author of Genesis assumed the earth was sufficiently populated for Cain to find a wife and to warrant the building of a city. Cain and his descendants are described as the founders of primitive Eastern civilization. Cain and his son Enoch were the originators of urban culture. Lamech was the first polygamist. His boastful hymn of hate is the first poem in the Bible (4:23-24). Jabal was the father of the Bedouin.³ Jubal was the father of music. Lamech's polygamous relation and boastful hymn of hatred reveal that civilization does not improve morality and spirituality.

Hope for mankind is seen in the new line of Seth. Cain and his descendants were thoroughly corrupted by sin. It was in the days of Enoch, a descendant of Seth, that men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Theological Concepts

The nature of temptation

Man has been endowed with certain features which are vital to life. His natural instincts include self-preservation and

³ Bedouin are wanderers of the desert who dwell in tents and keep small herds of livestock.

Further indication of Cain's lack of spiritual concern is found in his answer to

_____ in _____

(reference)

(Read the entire account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-24.)

Cain's punishment for sin was tempered with God's _____.

(mercy)

Place the names Adam, Seth, Cain, and Enoch in the proper blanks. (One is used twice.)

_____ and his descendants were corrupted by sin.

_____ who was another son of _____

brought new hope. In the days of _____, a descendant of _____, man began to call on Jehovah.

(Cain, Seth, Adam, Enoch, Seth)

reproduction. These are not evil within themselves, but their abuse constitutes sin. God's plan of creation includes man's working to gain bread for physical existence. The natural instinct which motivates him to earn bread is perverted when it controls his life to the extent that his relationship to God is neglected. Man is one with material existence, but he rises above the animal level to the spiritual realm of fellowship with God. A materialistic philosophy distorts the nature of man by emphasizing his instincts but denying his spiritual nature and responsibility to God. Satan tempts man by deceiving him with half-truths.

Man's natural instinct of reproduction is perverted when no restraint is placed on sexual desires. These desires were given to man and woman for relationship and fulfilment in reproducing themselves. When sexual desires control life to the extent that all other values are forsaken, man becomes a slave of his fleshly nature and is robbed of his uniquely human feature which distinguishes him from animal creation. Temptation is an enticement for man to misuse his divinely given instincts.

Pride is good as long as it motivates a person to do his best. It becomes perverted when it creates jealousy towards others who succeed and when it blinds with regard to one's own accomplishments. Self-interest is an outgrowth of self-preservation and is essential to survival. It becomes sinful when a person is so dominated by it that he oppresses others for self-gain.

The nature of death

God proclaimed that death would come to Adam and Eve if they disobeyed Him. The serpent deceived Eve by convincing her that she would not die. The question is often asked whether spiritual or physical death was meant.

In the light of the doctrine of creation, death means more than the cessation of physical existence. Since creatures are dependent on God for physical existence, to be separated from God means physical death; however, it means more than that. It means to be barred from fellowship with God and to encounter the judgement and wrath of God which is spiritual death. Actually, spiritual and physical death cannot be sharply separated. Physical death is the result of spiritual death which is caused by sin.

Jesus' death and resurrection were both required to overcome death caused by sin. Jesus' shed blood atones for man's sins, thereby removing the cause of his spiritual death. The resurrection overcomes sin's consequence which is physical death. The body which the grave claims as a result of sin will be given up in the day of resurrection.

Spiritual effects of the sin of Adam and Eve are portrayed in Genesis by the loss of direct fellowship with God. Physical consequences are pictured by the loss of access to the tree of life.

Man's confrontation with temptation and his yielding to it revealed new elements in his nature and environment. As a creature who had been given freedom of choice, the potential of man's choosing wrong was inherent in his nature from the beginning. The appearance of temptation and man's response to it introduced a new era in the realm of created existence. The Fall has reference to Adam's act of disobedience in which mankind became degenerate and his environment became afflicted with natural evil as punishment for his sin. In contrast to creation which was good and orderly before the appearance of sin, degenerate man and fallen nature reflect the deceitfulness and rebellion of dependent man.

Archaeology and the Fall

In the vicinity of Nineveh, two temptation seals have been found. They have been dated about 3000 B. C. which predates Moses by fifteen hundred years. One has a tree in the centre, a

<p>Two of man's natural instincts are _____ and _____</p> <p>(self-preservation, reproduction)</p>
<p>When man lets natural instincts control his life to the exclusion or neglect of his relationship to his Creator, the result is _____</p> <p>(sin)</p>
<p>True or False.</p> <p>Temptation is an enticement for man to misuse his divinely given instincts. _____</p> <p>(True)</p>
<p>Which is true?</p> <p>_____ Physical and spiritual death are not related.</p> <p>_____ Spiritual and physical death cannot be sharply separated.</p> <p>(false, true)</p>
<p>Physical death is the result of _____</p> <p>which is caused by _____</p> <p>(spiritual death, sin)</p> <p>The Fall was the result of Adam's _____</p> <p>(disobedience)</p>

man on the right, a woman on the left plucking fruit, and a serpent standing erect behind her. The other seal has a picture of a man, a woman, and a serpent.

The Epic of Gilgamesh was recovered from the library of Ashurbanipal. Gilgamesh was the legendary king of Uruk towards the end of the fourth millennium, and the Epic describes his adventures in the company of his friend Enkidu. When Enkidu died, Gilgamesh crossed the waters of death in an attempt to find Utnapishtim who possessed a plant of life that would heal Enkidu. Gilgamesh found the magic herb, but he lost it through the guile of the serpent who stole it while Gilgamesh was bathing. The Epic also has a flood myth which will be discussed later.

In the Myth of Adapa, the hero was the son of Ea and his name has been equated with Adam by some scholars. Ea gave Adapa wisdom but not immortality. Adapa's duty was to provide daily food, which included fish, for the gods. While fishing, the South Wind capsized his boat, and in his anger Adapa uttered a curse and broke the wings of the South Wind so that it did not blow for seven days. The god Anu sent a messenger to find out what had happened and summoned Adapa to appear before him. Ea, the patron god of Eridu and father of Adapa, instructed Adapa how to gain favour with the two gods who kept the gate to Anu's abode. Adapa was warned not to accept the bread and water that would be offered him in heaven because it would be bread and water of death. Adapa managed to obtain the goodwill of Anu, and the great sky-god decided to offer to him the bread and water of life. When Adapa refused to eat and drink, Anu declared, "Thou shalt not have eternal life!" Anu informed him that he had lost the gift of immortality through his father's guile. He was sent back to earth with the sentence that mankind should henceforth be subject to disease.

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading Genesis 2:5–4:26 and the study manual, do the following exercise.

1. Give two reasons critical interpreters believe Genesis 1 and 2 are from different original documents.

2. From Genesis 2:5-9, list two statements that indicate the “second creation account” was intended to explain the purpose of man in relation to God and His creation.

3. In what general area was the Garden of Eden located? _____

4. What is the theological significance of the tree of knowledge? _____

5. List three important teachings concerning marriage found in Genesis 2:24 and 25. _____

6. Name three sinful attitudes revealed in the temptation to take the forbidden fruit. _____

7. List the three progressive steps in Eve’s temptation and suggest contemporary parallels.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

8. How did God know Adam had sinned? _____

9. What were the spiritual consequences of sin? _____

10. How did original sin affect the physical universe? _____

11. List two scriptural indications that Cain lacked spiritual concern.

12. What does Cain's punishment reveal about God? _____

13. Define temptation. _____

14. What is spiritual death, and how is physical death related to it? _____

15. Define the Fall. _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 22–28) in *A Nation in the Making* and write an essay entitled, "A Comparison of the Understanding of Sin According to Genesis 3 and 1 John 2."

Advanced activity (Level 3). Read pages 27–38 in *The Book of Genesis* by Fritsch and do the following.

1. State the likenesses and the differences in the accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2.
2. Discuss the meaning of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life.
3. Write an essay entitled, "Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained." Point out each area of God's creation which was affected by sin. Explain how God's redemption will restore all that was lost.

Seminar Discussion

1. Does Genesis 2 give evidence of being a second creation account from a second document? Could the author of Genesis have prepared for the Fall in chapter 3 without having included chapter 2?
2. In considering the tree of life, would man have had eternal life if he had not sinned? Were the consequences of his sin physical death, spiritual death, or both?
3. In the light of Genesis 2 and 3, evaluate man's freedom. Does the contemporary understanding of human freedom correspond with Genesis 2 and 3?
4. Does Genesis 3 reveal sin to be basically an act or an attitude?
5. Can one hold to the historical framework of the Fall in the light of the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Myth of Adapa? Explain.
6. Is the source of temptation from without or from within man?