

THE PENTATEUCH I: GENESIS

WEEK 3

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OUTLINE

STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST TOLEDOT

The First Toledot runs from 2:4 to 4:26 in roughly three acts:

- ① The Special Creation of Man and Woman
- ② The Fall of Mankind
- ③ The Immediate Consequences of the Fall

Concentric Narrative Pattern:

A	Introduction of Man	2:4-17
B	Introduction of Woman	2:18-25
C	Introduction of Serpent	3:1-5
The Fall of Mankind (3:6-13)		
C'	Judgment of Serpent	3:14-15
B'	Judgment of Woman	3:16
A'	Judgement of Man	3:17-24

OUTLINE

CONTRAST WITH GENESIS 1

If Genesis 1 is a Google Map, then Genesis 2 is “Street View”: they are mutually complimentary but not inter-translatable.

Some Notable Differences:

- ① Genesis 1 emphasizes the image of God; Genesis 2 emphasizes the material origins.
- ② Genesis 1 describes mankind's roles on earth (1:28)
 - Procreation— Children do not (re)appear until Genesis 4:1
 - Dominion—Manifested in Genesis 2 in naming the animals (2:19-20) and cultivating the ground (2:15)
- ③ In Genesis 1, Man and Woman appear to be created at once, but separately over a significant period (months? years?) in Gen 2.

OUTLINE

PROVISIONS OF THE GARDEN

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- ① Beautiful Trees, Good for Food (2:9)
- ② Water—Four Rivers (2:10-14)
- ③ Work— Gardening, Farming (2:15)
- ④ Robust Freedom— Abundant Beautiful Trees Contrasted with The Tree of Knowledge of God and Evil
- ⑤ Creativity and Science—Familiarity with and Naming of the Animals (2:18-20)
- ⑥ Wife, as Companion (2:21-22)
- ⑦ Sexuality (2:24-25)

ORIGINS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Concerning Divorce, Jesus says:

Mark 10:5-9—“It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. 6 “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ 7 ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no [anthropos] separate.”

Jesus is implying that anything that deviates from Genesis is a perversion of God's original design.

THE WARNING

Francis Schaeffer claims this is no spooky tree.

But God has not made a bad tree. He has simply made a tree. And there is nothing intrinsic about this tree that is different in any way from any other trees. Rather, God has simply confronted man with a choice. He could just as well have said, "Don't cross this stream; don't climb this mountain." (Schaeffer, 71-2)

THE WARNING

Some difficulties:

- There is another tree, the tree of life together with the tree of knowledge of good and evil at the center of the garden.
- The Garden of Eden is a unique place that represents (not merely as representation) God's presence.
- God tends to forbid things that are genuinely bad for us; here, knowledge of good and evil are beyond our creaturely ken.

THE SPECIAL CREATION OF ADAM

Genesis 1 and 2 both emphasize that Adam and Eve are special, but what does that mean for evolution and common descent?

Adam is made from the dust (2:7) but so are the animals (2:19). God breathes (naphach) into Adam so he becomes a “living being” or breather (nephesh), but all the animals are also so described (2:19; cf. 1:20, 21, 24).

Here are some biblical theological strands that point against common descent:

- ① Adam and Eve are called to rule over the animals (1:28) but we are called to honor our father and mother. Common descent would have Adam and Eve ruling over and honoring their animal parents.
- ② In Jesus’ genealogy, Adam is listed as ‘Son of God.’ Just as Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, Adam’s creation is represented as *sui generis*, and directly from God.

A significant hurdle for anyone attempting to reconcile common descent with a biblical worldview is that mankind is presented as different in kind, evolution presents man as different in degree. Any attempted harmonization will feel necessarily *ad hoc*.

OUTLINE

THE IDENTITY OF THE SERPENT

The internal evidence tells us the following:

- “Crafty”—also used at times to mean ‘wise’ in Proverbs and Job
- “than” permits the translation, “crafty like no other wild animal”
- “which the Lord God had made.”
- In light of Gen 1:31, the serpent was part of a creation that was “very good.”

These altogether imply that this is an especially smart non-human, created by God and, at that time, very good.

THE IDENTITY OF THE SERPENT

External evidence points more directly to Satan:

- JOB 40 There is decent evidence that Leviathan describes Satan from the Prologue
- ISA 27:1 In that day the Lord will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.
- EZE 28:13,4 You were in Eden, the garden of God . . . You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you.
- REV 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Note: proper snakes are nowhere else described as capable of speech or having independent spiritual significance

THE SERPENT

Further observations:

- From a literary point of view, it would be distracting to have a huge excursus on Satan's origins and identity here
- The author has not even finished describing the more immediate, local problems of mankind
- It is hardly implausible that Satan's best tactic was to enter the Garden as a beast. (Cf. Mark 5: 12,13)

How might Adam and Eve have reacted if Satan appeared as-

- An Angel?
- Another human?
- Another animal?

THE SERPENT

*What may this mean? Language of man pronounc'd
By tongue of brute, and human sense express'd?
The first at least of these I thought denied
To beasts, Whom God on their creation day
Created Mute to all articulate sound . . .
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.
(IX.553-6; 566)*

*I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low
. . . Till on a day, roving the field, I chanc'd
A goodly tree far distant to behold,
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mix'd
Ruddy and gold: I drew nearer to gaze;
When from the boughs the savory odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleas'd my sense
(IX.571-2; 575-80)*

OUTLINE

God says in 2:17, “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

What exactly happened?

- Aware ‘Naked,’ this term is different from 2:25; connotes exposure, rather than safety
- For Woman- Difficulty in Childbirth and with Man
- For Man- Toil with the Earth, Extension to Adam’s Dominion (Cf. Romans 8:20-22)
- Genuine Physical Death (Gen 5:5)
- Exile (Cf. Mark 15:34; 1 Thess 1:9, Dan 12:2)

GOD'S MERCY

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What are some examples of God's mercy and provision even after the Fall?

- ① God does not arrive instantaneously but comes in the course of time.
- ② God asks Adam and Eve questions, rather than indicting them immediately.
- ③ God provides them with skins to cover themselves
- ④ God prophesies their redemption (the seed of the woman, 3:15) before even delivering their sentence of judgment! [See "Who is the Messiah?"]

GENESIS 4, THE TEXT

Many people puzzle over the questions of (1) Cain's pursuers (4:14) and (2) Cain's wife (4:17) and so on. Some conclude that there were other people on earth (Cf. Acts 17:26). Bruce Waltke (2007, 122) introduces these literary distinctions:

BLANK An inconsequential omission in a narrative.

GAP An intentional omissions of information in a narrative.

These “puzzles” are perfect examples of literary blanks. Such information is irrelevant to the story.

- ① First of all, why not Adam or Seth? Secondly, the story is about Cain, Abel to communicate a point, not an exclusive chronicle of the entire first family. For all we know, there were 400 daughters born before Cain.
- ② Notice also that the only wife with a name is Eve until we get to Lamech's (4:19) and then no other wives' names until Gen 11:29. For better or worse, the birth of women and their identity are not emphasized with few exceptions.

GENESIS 4, THEOLOGY

More could be said about Genesis 4 but here are some important take aways:

- The presence of a sacrificial system (4:3-4) and especially Cain's failure (4:8) demonstrate that impulse to sin passed from Adam and Eve to their children.
- God is incredibly merciful with Cain throughout this entire episode ([How?](#))
- The continuation of Cain's line develops the idea that sin is transmitted somehow, since Lamech boasts in his wickedness. It also demonstrates that God's image is still faintly present, given Cain's family's mastery of arts and sciences.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

When reading this passage, people often think this scenario is implausible. T.D. Alexander (2008, 104n4) remarks:

It should also be noted that aspects to this story are unique and place it outside the normal realm of human experience. For example, we are told that prior to eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the human couple were naked but had no sense of embarrassment about this. This reinforces the idea that the speaking serpent is no ordinary snake.

The point is that a lot of this story is outside of our experience, and we are unwise to use crass empiricism as the measure of the passage's truth.

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