

# Finer Grounds

## Genesis Lesson 2: Fall in the Garden

Genesis chapter 2 picks up with the completion of the heavens and the earth and, in verse two, we see that God “rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done”. The Hebrew word for “rested” is SHABATH. Does that word remind you of any other word? SHABATH is the root word for what we call the Sabbath or the last day (7th day) of the week that God commanded the Israelites to observe.

The first recorded observance of this day is found in Exodus 16 when the Israelites are to only gather their food for six days and remain inside on the seventh day. The actual commandment is found in Exodus 20:8-11 when Moses receives the Law from God on Mount Sinai. In that passage, God reiterates why He sets the seventh day apart from the others. Reflecting just briefly on our discussion from chapter one, we have yet another piece of strong evidence that God really did create the heavens and the earth in six literal days. He wanted His people to pattern their lives on the same time scale. If each day had been long ages, God might still be resting today and this pattern would make no sense. An interesting side note is that we base our days on a complete rotation of the earth, our months on a complete orbit of the moon around the earth, and our years as a complete orbit of the earth around the sun; however, our basis for a week is solely from God’s word.

### Read and meditate on Chapter 2

Beginning in chapter 2 we have a change, or rather an addition, in what God calls Himself. Instead of God (ELOHIYM), He becomes Lord

God (YEHOVAH ELOHIYM). YEHOVAH is the promised name of God that was considered by the Jews to be too holy to speak. It actually has no vowels (YHWH) and is known as the tetragrammaton, which is just a really big word that means “the four letters”. Because the Jewish people stopped voicing this name around the third century A.D. in order to not violate taking His name in vain, we do not know the definitive pronunciation. The vowels were added just to help us have some way to voice it.

It means “Lord, Master”, thus we get the translation of YEHOVAH ELOHIYM as “Lord God”. In verse 4 of chapter 2, God seems to be declaring that this is the true and accurate account of the creation events and then He proceeds to back track and fill in some gaps. It was not uncommon in ancient literature for the author to tell a story and then repeat it immediately after with further details. We learn from verse 7 that God “formed man of dust from the ground” and “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. Abraham and David support the creation account of man in Genesis 18:27 and Psalm 103:14 when they refer back to man being “but dust”. Despite all of our advances in science today, we still have not, nor ever will have, the ability to give living breath to anything. That power belongs only to the living God and He gave it to beings created from dust.

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## Think About It

Read Exodus 20:8-11.

According to Genesis 2:3, what two things did God do to the seventh day? Why?

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What did God create for man in Genesis 3:8?

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Look up the meaning of “Eden”.

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What did God give as food for man? (Gen. 3:9)

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What is the reason given in the text for a man to “leave and cleave” to his wife? (2:23-24)

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Please read, reread, meditate on, and dissect verse 24. What things can you learn about marriage from this verse?

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What did Jesus teach about marriage based on this verse? (Mt. 19:3-12)

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As we move into verse 15, we see that God expected man to labor in and guard, or have charge over, the garden from the beginning. Man having labor to do was part of that “good” creation. The only limitation God imposes on man is to not eat from one specific tree. He is clear that if that one limitation is not heeded, there will be a heavy consequence. Then in verses 18-25 we get the detailed account of the creation of woman. Just as it is clear that man working was always part of the plan, woman being his helper was always intended as well. In verse 18, God says, “I will make him a helper suitable for him.” Adam becomes the first patient who is “put under”, undergoes an operation, and shares one of his body parts with someone else.

You have probably heard the point made that Eve wasn’t taken from his head to signify she was superior to him, nor was she taken from his foot to signify she was inferior to him, but rather she was taken from his side to signify she was equal to him in worth. However, I want to be clear and make the distinction that the same worth does not equal the same role. Just as Jesus was no less deity than God the Father, yet had a tremendously different role of submission, so women, who are equal to men, have a tremendously different role of submission as well. We will look at that further in chapter three.

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## Read and meditate on Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is about the fall of man and begins with the serpent questioning the woman about God's one forbidden tree. Let's break down this central moment in history. From her response, it is quite obvious that she cannot use ignorance as an excuse. She states God's commandment very concisely. Most of God's word is very clear and simple. I'm not saying that everything in God's word is easy to understand, but His commandments on how to live our lives are usually not complicated until we start complicating them.

Sometimes we, or someone near us, starts to question whether or not God really meant what He said. This can potentially lead us into sin if we are not careful. I am not advocating a lack of seeking truth by any means. God and His word can stand up to the rigors of fair questioning or scrutiny, and He even commends those that seek truth. However, where we go to find the answer is where we can take a wrong turn. The Bereans in Acts 17:11 were commended as being more "noble-minded", not just for questioning whether or not they were being taught the truth, but rather questioning it and then turning to the Scriptures for those answers. We can easily be led astray by not questioning at all, and we can easily be led astray by trying to answer those questions from somewhere other than the right source.

Here in Genesis, Eve decides to follow the serpent in questioning God's command, but she makes the mistake of allowing a liar to give her the answer she wants instead of standing firm in the truth. This causes her to reject God and His word. I pray this will be a warning for us so that when we question, we will turn to the right

source, we will not be deceived, and we will not find ourselves opposing the Creator.

The serpent deceives her by making her think that there is an alternative "truth". He plants that seed of doubt that there would never really be such a negative consequence (vs. 4). In fact, he feeds her another lie that the alternative is better (vs. 5). Sin is pleasurable for the moment or we would not participate in it. It becomes detrimental when we start believing that the consequences of those sins do not or will not exist. If only we would trust God and KNOW that those consequences most definitely will exist!

After the serpent deceives Eve, she chooses to let her mind follow that deception (vs. 6). She falls into "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life" (I John 2:16). Verse 6 lets us know that Adam is around and readily accepts the forbidden fruit from his wife despite God's word. This provides yet another valuable lesson for us to obey God rather than ANYONE else.

## Think About It

**Read 2 Cor. 11:3 and answer the following questions:**

- **Like Eve, what was Paul afraid the Corinthians would be led astray from?**  
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- **Can you think of a commandment that someone you know has questioned and then chosen to be deceived about?**  
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- **Was the scripture about that commandment complicated or simple?**

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- **Did they turn to God's word to support their answer or use a different resource?**

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**From Genesis 3:6, tell how Eve fell into each one of these worldly things:**

- **"lust of the flesh" -**

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- **"lust of the eyes" -**

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- **"boastful pride of life" -**

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In the next section of chapter three, Adam and Eve try hiding from God and then, when that fails, they attempt the blame game. The result does not change - all sinned and all receive punishment. The serpent is cursed to be on his belly and eat dust from then on. As stated in our first lesson, Genesis should truly be described as a narrative, but it does contain a couple of prophecies and verse 15 is what many would call the "protoevangelium", which is Latin for "first gospel". Many believe that it is the first prophecy

of Jesus, being the seed of the woman, claiming ultimate victory over Satan, the serpent. The thought is that Satan would wound Jesus ("bruise him on the heel") by putting Him on the cross, but Jesus would destroy Satan ("bruise you on the head") when He rose from the grave and conquered death. At any rate, the serpent is cursed and God moves on to Eve.

It would seem that childbirth was going to be painful, but now it is going to be really painful ("multiplied"). Woman was made to be man's helper, but now he is going to "rule over" her. We often say painful childbirth was the curse women received, but it was not the only curse we were given. Lastly, the ground and man are cursed because of Adam's sin. I think we forget sometimes that all of creation suffers from sin entering the world, even the earth, and all of creation longs to be redeemed (Rom. 8:18-25). Man was created with the intention of working (2:15), but now his labor would be much more difficult.

## Think About It

**What do you think it says about man's nature that God could provide abundantly for us and only put one restriction on us, yet we still failed?**

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**When did fear become an element in man's relationship with God (3:10) and why?**

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Do serpents still crawl on their bellies?

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Do women still have great pain in childbirth?

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Does the ground still produce thorns and thistles?

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Does man still have to labor hard to grow things?

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Do we still return to dust when we die?

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I asked all of that to ask, does man still rule over woman?

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Pray for God to give you a heart of humility and understanding and then read 1 Tim. 2:8-15.

What two events does Paul reference to make his point about men and women's roles (vs.13-14)?

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Does this terminology bother you?

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Read Phil. 2:1-8 and ask God to help you emulate His Son, who was fully God (Col. 2:9) yet willingly humbled and submitted Himself completely to the authority of the Father.

What sin has Adam committed according to God in Genesis 3:17?

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Do you think the death consequence was physical, spiritual, or both?

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What scriptures do you use to support those beliefs?

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As concluding remarks, God reminds them that they were created from dust and now, just as He promised, they will die and return to that dust. Obviously, Adam and Eve did not drop dead after eating the fruit, but a strong argument can be made that they died spiritually in that moment and verse 19 seems to be good evidence that physical death is now on the table as well. Some consequences come immediately, others come much later, but remember God does not lie, those consequences will come. Let's try to walk in His light today and avoid those damaging consequences for ourselves and others.

**Think About It**

What did God make the garments for Adam and Eve out of in Genesis 3:21?

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What does that tell us, if anything, about how life had changed?

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What part of the serpent's words were true according to Genesis 3:22?

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Have you ever been told a half-truth?

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Did you feel like you had been deceived?

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Why do you think God no longer would allow man to eat from the tree of life?

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Will anyone be permitted to eat from the tree of life again and, if so, when? (Rev. 2:7, 22:14)

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