

“THE UNIQUENESS OF MAN”

Genesis 2:4-7

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INTRODUCTION

In this passage we see two problems, and two solutions:

- 1) The first problem relates to the account given here of creation; why is this description of creation so different from that of chapter one? Could this be a separate creation account that is different from chapter one and written by a different author? Are the two passages irreconcilable? As we will see, the answer in each case is “no.”
- 2) The second problem relates to the creation itself; as this scene is described, Earth was not suitable for human habitation, and there were not any humans to cultivate the land. These problems are resolved in vv. 6-7.

This passage gives us a unique perspective of the important place God gave man in His newly created world; all is described with the importance and privilege of man in view. Then when we get to chapter 3 we see how man abused his privilege and ruined the creation that was made with his benefit in mind.

Man was created in a unique way and is unique among all of God’s creatures. Yet, man did not properly appreciate his privilege and position and abused God’s creation. But, man’s beginning was awesome and God took a personal interest in man and had a personal relationship with him.

YOU MUST RECOGNIZE YOUR UNIQUENESS AS MAN CREATED BY GOD FOR HIS GLORY AND YOUR GOOD.

I. THE PROBLEM OF THIS PASSAGE (4)

Does chapter 2 contradict chapter 1? Was it written by a different author? There are several reasons why many (generally liberal critics) have held such a view:

A. Chapter 2 uses different divine names for God

1. Chapter 1:1-2:3 uses “God”—Elohim—35 times
2. Chapters 2:4-4:26 uses the following names:
 - “Yahweh Elohim” 20 times; this combination occurs only 6 times in the remainder of the OT!
 - “Elohim” occurs separately 5 times
 - “Yahweh” occurs separately 10 times.
3. It is obvious that this was a deliberate usage of these names to fulfill a plan.
 - The names appear together *to show that Yahweh is truly Elohim—the same God as in chapter 1.*
 - “Elohim” is the strong one who is to be feared. God is the infinitely Great One; therefore this name appears consistently in the Creation account.
 - “Yahweh” is formed from the common Hebrew verb meaning “to be”; Ex. 3:14-15 shows the significance of the name: “I am who I am.” He is self-determined, unchangeable, and most importantly, present with His people and faithful to His covenant.
 - Yahweh is the *personal God*, the *God of the history of salvation.*
4. God revealed himself by this name to Abraham (Gen. 15:7), if not earlier to His people.
5. Moses transferred this name even to earliest times and applied it to God’s activities for the care and redemption of mankind.

B. Different vocabulary is used in chapter 2

But, this is not unusual and is to be expected when subject matter changes.

C. A different concept of God is given in this section:

1. God *forms* man, He *plants* a garden, He *takes* man and *puts* him in the garden, He *makes* a helper for him, He *builds* a woman, He *walks* in the garden, He *drives* man out of the garden.

2. Again, all these verbs of God's special activity are used because of the subject matter of this chapter. All of this shows Yahweh's intimate concern and care for man that is consistent with His name, "Yahweh."

D. A different order appears to be given to His works of creation:

- Man (7)
- Trees (9)
- Beasts (19)
- Woman (22)

II. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

A. This chapter is concerned with man and with the preparation for the account of man's Fall in chapter 3

- The chapter does not present an account of Creation, nor does it follow chronological order.
- "And" does not mean "then" but is a loose "also."

B. Verse 4 states that this section is the "story" or "history" of the Heavens and the earth "when they were created" and "in the day that" Yahweh Elohim formed them.

- "Generations" does not mean "origins"; it is not an account of Creation!
- The word refers to one's posterity (cf. 2:1 "all their hosts") and to the development of such.
- "Heavens and Earth" refers to the completed universe as it does in 2:1.
- This passage give us the historical development of the universe

C. The passage begins "when they were created" and "in the day that Yahweh Elohim made" them.

- Compare the beginning words of the second "generation" section of Genesis—of Adam—in 5:1-2 and the similar wording.
- The creation of the universe is the starting point to the account of its historical development.
- Some points of the creation itself are considered as the preliminaries to the subsequent history of the world.

D. Note the expression "Earth and Heaven" at the end of v. 4

- Its only other occurrence in the OT is in Ps. 148:13.
- The Earth is the scene of the following history.
- Man's place and responsibility is the focus.

III. THE PROBLEMS FOR THE CREATION (5-7)

A. No "shrub of the field" [shrubs and trees] and no "plants of the field"

- "Field" refers to soil fit for cultivation by man.
- Refers to all plant life, but with emphasis on such as grow in areas under man's cultivation.
- We must remember that none of the Earth was under the curse at this time.
- This account is mainly concerned with that which concerns man.
- The solution to this problem is seen in vv. 8-9 [next message]

B. God had not sent rain upon the earth (5).

C. There was no man to cultivate the ground (5).

IV. THE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS FOR THE CREATION (6-7)

A. God sends "a mist" upon the Earth. (6)

- When we compare Job 36:27, we see that the reference here could be to the evaporation, condensation, cloud formation, rain process known to us today; but it could be a reference to a unique "misting" process due to the vapor canopy surrounding the Earth prior to the flood.
- "Used to arise—i.e. became a continual process
- "From the Earth"—as a whole, including bodies of water.

- “Watering the entire surface (“face”) of the ground—i.e., especially the areas of care and cultivation by man.
- B. God creates man, thereby removing the second obstacle. (7)
- God did not intend man to dwell in an empty, waterless waste.
1. God “formed” man—i.e. molded him like a potter (Jer. 18:2)
 - a. He took particular care and gave personal attention to man’s creation.
Involves the skill of a workman (Ps. 94:9—“He who formed the eye”)
Implies sovereignty (Is. 29:16—the potter and the clay)
 - b. He used the “dust from the ground.”
 - The Earth’s finest elements
 - Probably a damp mass of fine earth
 Such an action should hinder human pride.
Such an origin shows how the Fall is possible.
Yet, man’s uniqueness is clearly seen in this action; the earth “brings forth” others (1:24), but man is formed by God’s direct activity.
 2. God “breathed into his nostrils.”
 - a. Personal “face to face” intimacy
 - b. No other creature was made in this way.
 - c. Man is truly unique.
 - d. This was not “air” or “human breath,” but is God’s own vital breath.
 - e. Here we see the divine life-giving force through the Holy Spirit showing God’s omnipotence.
 - f. This description merely gives prominence to the peculiar sign of life—i.e. breathing.
 - g. This passage describes the origin of all human life.
 3. Man’s uniqueness is not seen here in the “elements” used in his creation.
 - a. All animals have the “breath of life” (7:15, 22).
 - b. Animals are called “living souls” (1:20, 21, 24, 30).
 - c. This passage does nothing to define or distinguish “soul” and “spirit.”

CONCLUSION

This description of God’s creative activity of man makes obvious the fact that man is unique, that he has an intelligent, morally responsible spiritual nature, and that he is immortal.

God is your maker; you are accountable to Him.

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