

GENESIS

2:4-25

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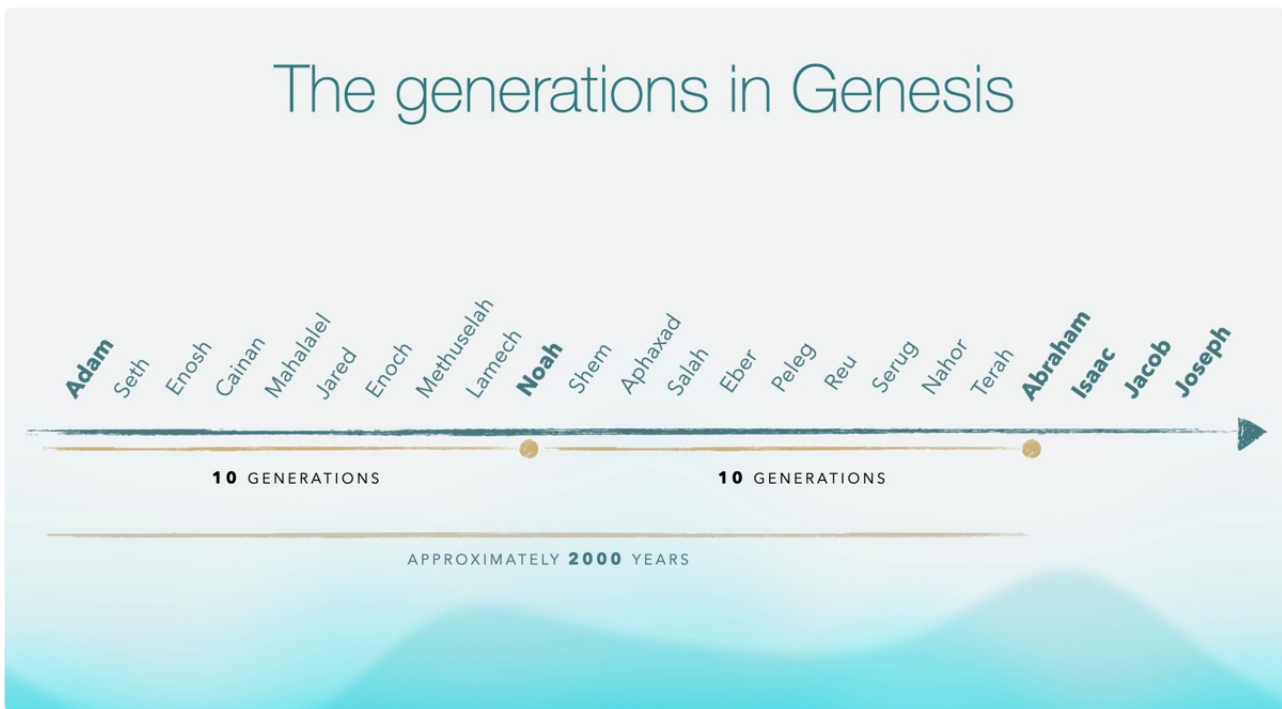
Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 23rd July 2023 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Psalm 103:1-22

Introduction

We are four weeks into our verse by verse study of the book of Genesis, and this morning we'll pick up our study in chapter 2 verse 4, and finish the chapter. If you have your Bible's to hand (which it's always good to do) then now's a good time to turn, flip or scroll there.

The generations in Genesis



The 50 chapters of the Bible book of Genesis, or beginnings, covers the first 24 generations of mankind, beginning with the very first generation in history, and ending with brief notes about Joseph's children, Ephraim and Manasseh. And as we journey through this book we'll see Moses focus on 4 key events, followed by 4 specific individuals. Right now, in chapters 1 & 2, we're looking at the first event of all — the creation of the world and all that is in it.

Last week in the closing verses of chapter 1 we read of the creation of mankind, both male and female, and now here in chapter 2 we will get more detail of what happened on day six (and in advance of that) specific to the creation of man, the environment in which God put him, and the instructions He gave him.

Overview of chapter two

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- **v1-3** — God rested on the 7th day
- **v4-15** — The environment where God placed man
- **v16-17** — The instructions God gave man
- **v18-25** — The creation of Eve & the first marriage

Breaking this chapter down, the first 3 verses (which we covered last Sunday) declare that God, having finished His work on day six, rested on the seventh day — not because He was tired, but because His act of creation was complete.

In verses 4 to 15 (which we'll start with today) we learn of the environment in which God would place Adam and Eve, followed by verses 16-17 where we will read that He gave Adam responsibility for tending to the garden of Eden, but also instructions on what he could and should not do.

The final verses of the chapter, which we'll finish with this morning, are 18-25, where we will read how God created Eve and the first marriage was established.

Chapter two

So then, let's pick up this chapter in verse 4:

Genesis 2:4-6

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Moses, having recorded the basic order of creation in chapter 1, now gives us further detail about a couple of those days, and here in *these* verses we are told the *conditions* on day 3, after God had separated dry land from the sea, but *before* He had created vegetation — that there was a mist that went up from the earth, and no rain. It is in *this environment* that God would create all life, including mankind. And while it's a small detail, it's one that is born out by science that water is necessary for life — so much so that billions of dollars have been spent by NASA looking for evidence of water on other planets, as they recognise that without it, life could not exist.

And so, the ground was watered by the mist, we read. But why, you may wonder, is it noted that God had not caused it to rain on the earth? Well, I don't think God has included anything in His word for the sake of it. And many (including myself) believe that this is noting that from creation to the flood, there was no rain at all.

"None at all?!" you might think. Well, as we looked at a couple of weeks ago, on day two God made a firmament that separated waters above and below it — and the thought I previously shared was that this was some form of water canopy that meant the earth's atmosphere would have been quite different, *without* rain, but *with* this mist that watered the earth (these conditions in part accounting for the longer ages that people lived before the flood).

And this is one verse that seems to lead us in that direction. Indeed, there is no further mention of rain *until* chapter 7 when God is talking to Noah immediately before the flood — though of course there were many things, without doubt, that happened in those 1600 or so years that are not recorded in Genesis. But we also read in Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of **things not yet seen**, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

What were the things that were not yet seen? Well, it certainly *was* the worldwide flood that God would send, but was it not *also* the rain that would bring that flood? I leave you to draw your own conclusions, but what we know with certainty is that God is in control of the rain, for not only do we read here in Genesis 2 that God had *not* caused it to rain (at least at this point), but we know that He intentionally withheld it at *later* times, as noted by prophets such as Elijah and Amos.

So, whether God had the *ability*, as Creator of all we see, to *determine* if it rained or not, is *not* up for debate. But whether it rained or not before the flood is a detail we *can* discuss, though we should not divide over if we disagree.

Now, another detail we see here in verse 4, is that this is the first of hundreds of times the phrase “the LORD God” appears in the Bible. And this is one of sixteen *Jehovah titles* we find in the Old Testament, where the name Jehovah or Yahweh (depending of your pronunciation of the original Hebrew text) is combined with other words, and it means the Eternal Creator. Along with the other Jehovah names, it is a great reminder of who our God is:

1. Jehovah-Elohiym — the Eternal Creator
2. Adonai-Jehovah — the Lord our Sovereign; Master Jehovah
3. Jehovah-Jireh — the Lord will see or provide
4. Jehovah-Nissi — the Lord our banner
5. Jehovah-Rapha — the Lord our healer
6. Jehovah-Shalom — the Lord our peace
7. Jehovah-Tsidqenuw — the Lord our righteousness
8. Jehovah-Mekaddishkem — the Lord our sanctifier
9. Jehovah-Sabaoth — the Lord of hosts
10. Jehovah-Shammah — the Lord is present
11. Jehovah-Elyown — the Lord Most High
12. Jehovah-Rohi — the Lord my Shepherd
13. Jehovah-Hoseenu — the Lord our Maker
14. Jehovah-Eloheenu — the Lord our God
15. Jehovah-Eloheka — the Lord thy God
16. Jehovah-Elohay — the Lord my God

So with those reminders about the triune God who made man, and the environment in which He placed him, we read on in verse 7 where *Jehovah-Elohiym* (the Eternal Creator) is used again:

Genesis 2:7

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

So God formed man, moulding or squeezing him into shape as a potter does to clay, and He did so from the dust of the ground. And that little detail is more incredible than Moses would have known when writing this, for our bodies are literally made up of more than a dozen elements found in the ground. And while at face value, they're not worth much due to their abundance, when God creates something out of them, He produces something beyond the sum of its parts. And like Adam, your worth is not derived from the sum of the organic compounds that make up your body, but from what God has done in creating you.

And we read here that God formed the man, literally breathed life into him, and he became a living being. This was the first human to ever walk on this planet. Not descended from an ape without purpose or hope, but created by God. Not from the elements found on an accidental planet, but from the dust of the earth which God had created with all that was necessary to sustain life.

But note, that what is being described here is not the chronology, but the conditions — this is not taking place after day 7, but looking back at how God (on day six) had created man out of the environment that He had made on day three. And next we are told where he would place that man:

Genesis 2:8

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

What a garden that must have been, given that God (who made every beautiful thing) directly planted this Himself. The name Eden actually means *pleasure* or *delight*.

Genesis 2:9

And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And as Moses describes the garden of Eden, we see *why* we're starting to get some of these details — framing up what would be recorded in chapter three where Adam and Eve would eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was a literal tree. And we see that out of the same earth, same ground, same elements, God made the trees and *all* vegetation. Once again this is a scientifically accurate statement in that all living things are comprised of carbon compounds made from the elements we find in the ground.

But there's something we should note again here, that all this was done on day three. We know that from chapter one, and if you recall that was the only day where God said it was good, *twice*. And furthermore, when God finished His creation on day six, He saw that it was all *very* good. But how can that be if the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was there? Because it wasn't the tree that was the problem — it was Adam and Eve's disobedience. And we'll come back to that.

We read on:

Genesis 2:10-14

Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

And so we read that God created a river flowing out of Eden, and this river split four ways, named as recorded here. Many have speculated as to Eden's location, perhaps using the river Euphrates as we know it, or the ancient land of Assyria as a way to pinpoint it. But that's either forgetting or ignorant of how Noah's flood would have utterly destroyed the world that then was.

We shouldn't confuse the river Euphrates of Genesis 2 with the river Euphrates we know today. They are two different places, in the same way as Boston, England, and Boston, USA are very different.

As Noah and his sons discovered the post-flood world in front of them, they would have no doubt been inclined to re-use at least some names they were familiar with — just as those from the UK that settled in the USA re-used names such as Manchester, Cambridge, Worcester and so on.

So as Dake wisely notes, it would be wise for all to read and be content with what we read in Deuteronomy 29:29:

Deuteronomy 29:29

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Don't go on an archaeology trip to find the garden of Eden - you're not going to find it.

Now, following the garden of Eden being created and planted by God Himself, we read in verse 15:

Genesis 2:15

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

That is, on day six, God put man in the garden He had created on day three. And He gave him responsibility for it — to tend it and keep it. Now, there's a couple of things to consider with that.

First, this responsibility to *work* was given *before* the fall. That is, God very clearly designed us to work. But the idea of work was not so much for self-preservation, but for recreation. And we know, if we're honest, that there is much satisfaction in a good days work — even in this world, where *after* the fall, this became *hard* work. There was toil with the soil. But we're not at chapter 3 yet, and I can't help but think of the enjoyment there could have been for Adam here. For the creative ability we have is *because* of the likeness in which God created us, and gardening is one such avenue *for* that creative ability — and it would be a lot more fun if it weren't for all the thorns and thistles that followed chapter 3, right?!

The second thing to consider, is that God gave Adam a duty to *protect* — for the word *keep* is from the Hebrew word *shamar*, which means to hedge about, guard, protect, or preserve. And as one commentator suggests, perhaps this the first hint that there would be an enemy whom Adam ought to be wary of.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Up until now, every command God had given Adam was about what he could and should do. But now there is one simple command to not do something. And in it, there is a test of obedience. Would Adam obey the Lord? Sadly, we know how that worked out. But do we think it would have been any different for us? I think not. For that same challenge remains for you and I — will we obey God? Will we obey Him when He calls us to serve, asks to wait or be patient, or tells us to pay our taxes or to tithe? Will we obey God when we read His commands to not look with lust or envy. Will we obey when His Word tells us to pray without ceasing, meet more and more together, to be diligent in His Word, and to take the gospel to all? Will we? Will you?

Remember Samuel's words to king Saul, that *to obey is better than sacrifice*. God's instruction wasn't for Adam to make a sacrifice to Him, for there was no need — there had been no sin. But rather His instruction was a simple request to obey Him. But it came with clear warning, that if Adam disobeyed, he would die. Not physically, but spiritually. Of course, he would later die physically too (also as consequence of sin) but his disobedience would kill his relationship & fellowship with God.

But why did God give this option to Adam in the first place? Because God wanted a loving relationship with mankind, and love is built on choice. We read in Ephesians that God chose us before the foundation of the world, but for that love to be reciprocated we must also choose Him; and that means obedience to our Creator.

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Now, anyone who has seen a man live alone will appreciate this! That is, we're not always the tidiest of folks - unless of course you're Alan, who I must say has a very tidy house!

But in seriousness, God knew what man needed, because He had created him with this in mind — not to live alone, but to live as man and wife. One reason for that was His command that we read in chapter one, which was to go forth and multiply. And that cannot be done in isolation, nor can it be done with two men or two women. But with one man and one woman, as God created. And furthermore, that is to be done in the context of a marriage that there may be that family unit that children so very much need.

But we also read that God made a helper comparable to Adam. Not merely compatible with him, but comparable. For it's more than a question of biology and bedroom. But rather, God created Eve to be suitable intellectually, morally *and* physically. Not the same as Adam, but fitting for him. Indeed, what Adam needed was not someone identical to him, but rather one that would complement him, not pandering to his selfishness. Indeed, the only thing that God said was not good in His creation was that man was on his own, but day six didn't finish that way for God created Eve that same day, and (having united them as husband and wife) God saw it was good.

However, as much as noting that Eve wasn't merely compatible, I urge you to also note that God didn't make Eve to *complete* Adam either. Of course, it sounds cute and romantic to use that Hollywood line "you complete me", or to refer to our spouse as our other half, but that's not quite how things work, for we read in Colossians chapter two:

Colossians 2:8-10

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power.

Yes, there is a joyful wonder in marriage — that's good, and right, and proper — but don't look to your husband or wife to complete you, for that's too great a burden to put on them. What they should do is complement you. Not in the sense of saying you have nice shoes. But by being comparable — that is, a different person of equivalent quality who encourages you in your walk with Christ, not draws you away from Him.

Of course, we should encourage and advocate for marriage — and godly ones at that — for it is a tremendous blessing that God designed and instituted. But, if you are a single Christian, don't think you are half a person. I'm not saying that marriage is not needed, or not good. But that our identity and completeness comes from Christ, not from the person we're married to.

Now, to demonstrate to Adam his need and lack of a suitable option from the animal world, God gives Adam the first ever object lesson. We read:

Genesis 2:19

Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

That is, God created all living beings — beasts and birds — from the same elements He created Adam. And here we read that He brought them to Adam, first for him to name them — in which, we see an interest from God in what man would do (He wasn't and isn't distant from His creation). When did this take place? Well, we can be sure it was on day six, for it proceeded God creating Eve (who was created by the end of that day) and of course followed God creating Adam, for that's a prerequisite for this taking place.

What some suggest, however, is that there is a contradiction in the order noted in chapters one and two — that in the first chapter we read of animals being created first, and in this chapter we read of them being created second. And, trying to overcome this supposed contradiction, some suggest that God re-created each animal in front of Adam. But that's not what we read here, for the tense in the Hebrew is not the perfect, but the pluperfect tense — which means in English we should indeed read this as "Out of the ground the Lord God HAD formed every beast of the field..." — that is, God had *already* created these beasts and birds, but now brought them before Adam. There is no contradiction here.

And Adam goes ahead and names them. We read:

Genesis 2:20

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

So then, not only does Adam find no suitable partner in the animal kingdom, but he sees how they *do* have suitable partners for themselves. And inevitably this would have reinforced what God had said, that it was not good for man to be alone. And so we read:

Genesis 2:21-23

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to 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."

Here, the first general anaesthetic and operation takes place. And once again, I'm certain Moses didn't comprehend the depth of scientific accuracy in what he was writing. For we have now discovered that ribs are one of the few bones from which we can extract stem cells from the bone marrow — these cells being ones that *not only* can turn into different types of *blood* cells, but in some cases develop into *any* type of cell required in the body. Now, God could have created Eve any way He wanted to, but He *chose* to do so in this way, which we only now understand some of the details of (from a biological point of view).

However, this was also symbolic in more than one way. First, that Eve was taken from Adam's side that He might treat her as if she were his own body, just as Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus:

Ephesians 5:28-29

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

Husbands, you are to nourish and cherish your wife. There's no excuse as a Christian not to do that. But wives, you are to submit to your husband — getting behind him, not with a firing squad, but in a loving and supportive way. When both do that as the Bible instructs, it's a beautiful thing. And few have articulated it as well as Matthew Henry, who wrote:

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

Matthew Henry

What a beautiful picture of marriage and what God did here in chapter two.

But secondly, that which God did here (in creating Eve from one of Adam's ribs) was symbolic of a marriage far greater than that of Adam and Eve, or that of any couple in this church. For it also pointed to Christ and His bride; the church. Following Jesus' death on the cross, a Roman soldier stuck a spear in *His* side bringing forth blood and water, and we see that the Bride of Christ was born — how incredible! Especially when we consider that this symbolism took place before the fall, for it shows once again that God knew that we would sin, and that our salvation would require Jesus sacrifice for us, yet He still created us. What love!

Now, with God having created man, and also woman as a comparable helper to him, Moses writes:

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

So here we have the first instruction on marriage itself, that there is to be a separation from the past, and unity in the present. That is, while there may be much talk with your parent, friends or even colleagues of how your *boyfriend* or *girlfriend* treats you *prior* to marriage, that relationship changes *when* you marry, for as a married couple you are one flesh, and you should act like it. And that means you shouldn't be talking poorly of your spouse to others. You shouldn't be pouring your heart out to your colleagues about what your spouse did to upset or annoy you over the weekend.

Now, let me be perfectly clear, I am not saying that you don't ask for godly counsel on how you can love your spouse better. Nor does it mean you don't ask for help or even protection in an abusive relationship. Rather, what I am saying is that the first person you talk to about any disagreement or difficulty in your marriage *is* your spouse, and not your parents, children, siblings, friends or worst of all - your Facebook friends. That's a sure way to push your spouse away from you, rather than draw closer to them. Far too many times I've heard people in the office talk about what annoys them about their spouse, what they notice they don't do, or what frustrates them that they do do. But as Christian couples we are to work through our differences (often rooted in our selfishness) together.

Just picture Adam and Eve — they literally had no-one else to talk to. If Adam didn't put the bins out (so to speak), despite promising to do so, the only person Eve could take that frustration to was God or Adam himself. And that's how it ought to be with us. Marriage is not easy; it requires work, sacrifice, and commitment. It requires communication and humility. But the rewards are high.

Of course, if you want counsel as to how to treat your spouse, then I'll gladly sit down with you over a coffee as we look together at what the Bible says. But don't come to me with a frustration (or list of them) that you've never spoken to your spouse about.

Now, this union of two people is not to be tampered with by anyone. Jesus Himself quoted this verse when responding to the Pharisee's question about divorce. We read in Matthew chapter 19:

Matthew 19:4-6

And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

There's beauty in unity. And we're to do all we can to hold marriages together - whether our own, or those around us. For a healthy marriage is not only *desirable*, but serves as an *example* of Christ and the church. And thus we must be wise to protect ourselves and others from situations that could lead to unfaithfulness, or division in a marriage.

As we conclude this chapter, we read one more verse:

Genesis 2:25

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

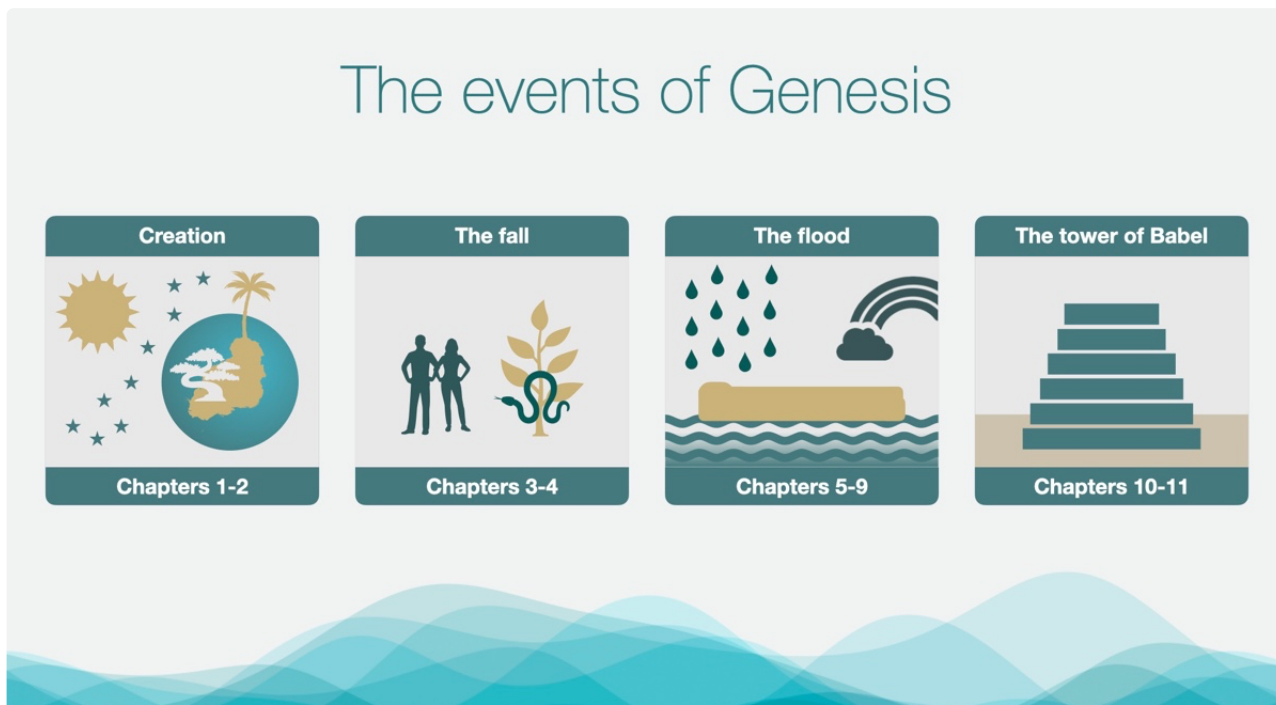
This was possible because sin had not yet entered. That is, Adam and Eve were able to enjoy the beauty of each other without that beauty being tainted by sin. And oh how sin has ruined the specialness of sex, and cheapened the body. While it claims to celebrate both, it actually commercialises and desecrates both.

However, as Christians we are to protect ourselves from all that would cheapen our view of sex. We need to be very careful in what TV shows, films or music we watch or listen to. We need to keep ourselves from pornography online or in print. And we need to keep good company, that we would not speak of sex in a way that belittles it. It is not merely a physical activity, as if it were some hobby you could throw to the side or pick up when you fancy it.

But here, sin was not yet present, and there was innocence and freedom.

Conclusion

That brings us to the end of chapter two, and to the end of this first event noted in Genesis; the creation of the world and all we see.



Next week, we'll study all of chapter three, so please read ahead, even write down your questions and thoughts as you prepare your heart to hear God's Word. We'll be reading about a pivotal moment in human history, known as the fall, which impacts everything in our lives today, the world around us, and our future.

Application questions

As we close this study of chapter two, here's a few questions to think about — both now and in the week ahead:

- Are you prepared to obey God in all things?
- Is your view of marriage the same as God's view?
- Married couples, are you acting as one flesh or undermining that?

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