Studies in Genesis - 04

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Studies in Genesis

CHAPTER II

A FINISHED CREATION—God's Sabbath Rest

THE CREATION OF MAN TOLD IN DETAIL

As we begin our study of the second chapter of Genesis, we need to remember that, when "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21), to write the sacred Scriptures, they did not divide the books of the Bible into chapters and verses. That division was made for our convenience by godly men of comparatively modern times. We thank God for their "labor of love"; but these men do not claim inspiration for this work. The words are inspired by God; sometimes the chapter divisions might be made differently.

We need to keep this fact in mind as we think of the creation story; for we have in the first two chapters of Genesis not two separate accounts of the creation, but one unbroken record. In the first chapter God tells the story in outline, as we saw in our previous lessons; then in chapter two He goes back, as it were, to fill in some of the details concerning the creation of man.

Now the first six verses of chapter two might very logically be a part of chapter one, for they round out that first week, telling of a finished creation in six days, and of God's sabbath rest on the seventh day. Then verses 7-25 of this second chapter give us God's account of the creation of man told in some detail.

Accordingly, chapter two falls into these two parts, which we shall consider in their order.

I

A FINISHED CREATION—God's Sabbath Rest

In verses 1-3 we read:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended
his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

That is, God worked six days; and on the seventh day, His work having been finished, God rested. And when did God rest? God rested when His work of creation was finished.

**GOD’S SABBATH REST—A TYPE OF HIS FINISHED REDEMPTION**

Do you know, my friends, that the first three verses of this chapter set forth a fundamental Bible truth? God finished His work; and because it was finished, because there was nothing more to do, God rested. Now can you, who are “listening in” on our radio Bible study, apply that lesson to yourselves? It is a picture of God’s rest—and ours, if we but take it—in Christ’s finished work of redemption on Calvary’s Cross.

Let us turn to chapters three and four of Hebrews, for there we find how we may enter into God’s rest. And the heart of the message of these chapters is stated in Heb. 4:10:

“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Now if you enter into God’s rest, you have to stop working, because you have the great example from God Himself. God worked; He worked six days; and then He rested. But why did God rest? Because His work was finished. But, my friends, our works are never finished. How then can we rest? We do not rest in our works. God rested in His works because they were all finished, and what God did was good. We rest from our works when we rest in Christ’s redemptive work that is finished.

The Lord Jesus said in His great intercessory prayer, uttered shortly before He went to the cross: “Father, the
hour is come... I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:1, 4). And His sixth cry from the cross was a shout of triumph, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). In the work that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross God now rests, and in that work accomplished on the cross we must rest. There is no other rest for the sinner’s heart.

God’s beautiful creation was marred by sin; and in that moment God’s rest in His finished creation was broken. But when, in the person of His Son, He came to redeem sinful man, He rested in the all-sufficient work of the Lamb of Calvary. Moreover, the Son of God ascended into heaven and “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). To sit down is to rest!

Did you ever know anyone who, trusting in the law to save him, had rest in his heart about heaven? The man who claims that he has to keep the law will never say that he is sure of his salvation, but that he has to wait to find out. Now you ask, “Why?” It is just because he is not resting in the finished work of Christ.

If we have to keep the law, then our redemption is not finished, because our lives are not finished. We have to go through some part of our lives yet, and we may not be able to keep the law during that time; so that our works are not finished. And not being finished, we can not rest.

We must rest as God rested. There is no other rest. “He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” We must cease from our works, as God did from His. God rested in His work, but we must rest in the work of Another. Why? Because we never shall have any finished works, in which to rest.

Oh, that I had words to make this plain! My friends, do you know that what I am saying to you now is what many millions, who have heard what they think is the Gospel, need to learn. Oh, the millions in Christendom today who fill our churches, going to and fro from services across the land, trusting in what they do to give them merit with God! How few know the finished work of Christ!

Sometime ago I was asked to see a man who was slowly dying of creeping paralysis. In my conversation with him
I found that he had been a member of a certain denomination for thirty years; and yet, when I asked him whether he was a Christian, he told me that he was doing his level best to make himself acceptable before God. When I asked him what he was doing, he enumerated many things, in which he was trusting. I asked him whether his trusting in those things had given him rest. His only reply was, “No, no, no!” I had the joy of telling him that rest of heart and acceptance before God do not come in the way whereby he was endeavoring to secure those things. I pointed him to the finished work of Christ on Calvary. And that poor man looked away to Christ’s finished work, rested in it, and died in peace.

This is the soul-satisfying blessing Christendom needs to know. It is the heart of the Gospel of the grace of God. My friends, the irrefutable proof is laid at the very door of the Bible, that you can rest only in a finished thing.

“But,” you say, “what does that have to do with me?” The fourth chapter of Hebrews shows that it has everything to do with you, because that chapter links God’s way of rest with your salvation. You cannot rest unless you have something in which to rest; nor can you rest unless you cease from your own works. God ceased from His own works and rested. You must cease from your works, but you must rest in your unfinished works. You must rest in Him who suffered and died upon the cross, bore the burden of your sins, looked up into His Father’s face, and said, “It is finished.” The work was done.

It is very significant that the same word “finished,” found in Gen. 2:1 is the word which our Lord uttered on the cross. The heavens and the earth were finished, and God rested. Jesus finished His work, and we rest.

Good works do play a vital part in the Christian life. They should follow salvation, as the fruit of the life of service in the name of Christ; they are never the means of salvation. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”—because we are saved “by grace . . . through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-10).

But for our eternal security we rest in the all-sufficient work of our crucified and risen Lord.
From our study of Gen. 1:26-29 we have seen that God created man in His own image and likeness. We have seen that Satan's falsehood of an organic evolution of man, from a lower form of animal life, is a futile attempt to deny the fall of man, his need of a Saviour, and the efficacy of the shed blood of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus to cleanse from sin.

We have seen from chapter one how God provided for man in His beautiful creation—light, food, all temporal needs—giving to man dominion over "every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

We shall see in our study today of Gen. 2:7-25 some highly significant details concerning our first parents, whom the Lord created on the sixth day.

MAN—A CREATURE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

"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 soul" (verse 7).

These words are deeper and convey more truth than one would suppose, upon a casual reading of them. And the first thing we note is that man is a creature, made by God, and accountable to his Creator. Man had a beginning; he was created; and is, therefore, not co-equal and co-eternal with God.

If you who listen to these broadcasts are familiar at all with the false cults, which we are considering on Sunday evenings, systems of religion that have come in the name of Christ, you will know that their primary teaching makes man co-equal and co-eternal with God. You are exhorted by one of these systems to assert continually your oneness with the "Mighty I Am" by stating, "I am life, I am eternal, I and God are one." This is also the essence of Christian Science. Such systems of false teaching make the same assertion, merely using different phraseology.

The Scriptures set forth no such doctrine; for, according to the Word of God, man had a beginning as a creature. He is, therefore, responsible to God who made him, and will
one day have to give an account to his Creator.

In this day of lawlessness and Bolshevism the doctrine of accountability to God is not very popular; but whether popular or not, it remains an inescapable and a solemn fact. We are responsible to our Maker, my friends, and we shall one day be called to give an account to Him.

**MAN'S BODY—“OF THE EARTH, EARTHY”**

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,” we read in these significant words, even as another Scripture plainly states, concerning man's mortal body, “The first man is of the earth, earthy” (I Cor. 15:47).

Man was formed of the dust of the earth. Nor is there the slightest hint here that this dust of the ground was in the form of organized matter, as the evolutionist would have us believe. Just recently I had a conversation with a man who called himself a “Christian evolutionist”—whatever that is. Evidently he means that he is a “theistic evolutionist,” as opposed to an “atheistic evolutionist.” The former says that God created man by the evolutionary process; the latter, not believing in a God, says that man evolved from a First Cause—whatever that is—apart from a Supreme Being.

But the man to whom I talked, who called himself a “Christian evolutionist,” told me that he believed the account of the creation of man as given in the second chapter of Genesis, only that the dust of the earth, out of which man’s body was made, was not unorganized but was organized. I said, “What do you mean by organized dust?” He said, “Well, a chimpanzee for instance.”

To what lengths men will go to wrest the Scriptures, to their own condemnation! There is not a hint here that the dust was “organized,” as he put it. Nor need any man think that, by calling himself a “Christian evolutionist” or a “theistic evolutionist,” he can so pervert the Bible record of the creation of man and, at the same time, be pleasing to God. Such a man is but falling into Satan’s snare; and Satan “is a liar, and the father” of lies. The Lord Jesus said so in John 8:44.

My friends, let me say what I have often said, that the theory of evolution is nothing less than a fairy tale foisted
upon credulous mankind. It is a theory, a supposition, and not seen in the divine record here in Gen. 2:7, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

"THE BREATH OF LIFE"—"A LIVING SOUL"

Having created man's bodily frame, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Thus God communicated to man something from Himself, by virtue of which man became distinct from all the animal kingdom. Not only was he a living soul; he was possessed also of a spirit, by which he was capable of knowing God and having fellowship with Him. This is something that the beasts which perish do not possess.

Thus man has a three-fold nature: Body, soul, and spirit. It has been suggested that, in his three-fold personality, man is a "tri-unity"; and that this is one way in which he was made "in the image and likeness" of God.

Paul recognized man's three-fold personality when he wrote to the Thessalonian Christians saying, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23)

With the possession of a spirit man became God-conscious, which fact determines an impassable gulf between the most sinful, the most degraded man and the highest form of animal life.

Many of you have heard me tell the story of a noted professor who adopted a chimpanzee into his home, that it might be a close companion for his own boy. As we might suppose, he did this in order to study the animal carefully. Later he declared that the chimpanzee acted in many ways as intelligently as his boy; for among other things he learned certain customs of table etiquette. He could use a knife, a fork, a spoon, even a table napkin. The professor thus endeavored to show how closely the animal kingdom is related to man.

Now all that he said about the formation of certain habits may be true; but there is one thing the boy could do that the ape could never do, no matter what his training or development might be. The ape could never reverently look up into the face of God, and say with understanding, "My
Father.” It requires God-consciousness to do that. It requires the possession of a spirit; and only to man did God give this likeness to Himself, when He created him and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

Man was not left to be guided by instinct, as in the case of the brute creation. God gave to him the intelligence to understand His will and His requirements. What a marvelous piece of work man must have been! Even in his fallen state there are traces of the glory of his original condition.

Man’s body, apart from his God-given spirit, is not of much intrinsic value. Not long ago a scientist declared that all the chemical elements in a human body could be purchased for seventy-nine cents! From the dust man was formed; and unto dust the human body returns when the spirit takes its flight. God said it would be so. How much easier it is for man simply to take God at His Word, than to try to evade and contradict and explain away His eternal verities!

Our God made much out of little, did He not? And the wonder of wonders is that the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the Creator of the universe, lived in a human body!

And He will take these bodies out of the grave, if they die before He comes. The human bodies of the Lord’s people will be taken out of the graves, and made like unto the body of the Son of God Himself, made like Him in every particular! When “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,” He made man in His own “image and likeness.” And when the Lord Jesus returns to call the bodies of “the dead in Christ” from their graves, He will fashion them “like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Phil. 3:21). Then body, soul, and spirit of the redeemed will be “forever with the Lord.”

**MAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN**

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the
tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:8, 9).

In Gen. 2:8-14 God tells us of the Garden of Eden, in which “he put the man whom he had formed.” He even tells us in what part of the world Eden was; for at least two rivers and two countries, found on the maps of history, are named in these verses: The Hiddekel, which is an ancient name for the Tigris River; the Euphrates; Ethiopia; and Assyria. Therefore, the fact that secular history calls the Tigris-Euphrates valley “the cradle of civilization” is but another testimony to the accuracy of the inspired Word of God; for, according to Gen. 2:8-14, it was there that God placed the man, Adam, “whom he had formed.”

Again, we are reminded of God’s goodness in providing for man “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” Of the two trees mentioned particularly here, we shall have more to say later—“the tree of life . . . and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads” (verse 10).

Two of these we have already identified. “Gihon” may be an ancient name for the River Nile, as it compassed “the whole land of Ethiopia.”

But let us note the words, “A river went out of Eden to water the garden.” In Scripture the river is a symbol of eternal life. The Lord Jesus used this term as a figure of the indwelling Holy Spirit, living in the hearts of His blood-bought church. These are His own words:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as scripture hath said, from within him (Revised Version) shall flow rivers of living water . . . This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37, 38, 39).

Again, the Lord said to the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's well,
“The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

And John on the Isle of Patmos, beholding the heavenly city, saw “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money . . . Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17).

From Genesis to Revelation, from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem, God is ever unfolding the revelation of Himself. He is ever picturing the wonders of His Son, our Lord and Saviour.

My friends, there is no monotony for the Christian here on earth; nor will there be in heaven. We shall ever find fresh wonders of His love and redeeming grace unfolding before us, symbolized in God’s Word by a flowing river of life eternal.

A Christian’s life should be like a river, too, not only possessing eternal life, but also taking life everlasting wherever he goes, even as he witnesses to a soul-thirsty world of the life-giving Fountain.

**MAN ENDOWED WITH A FREE WILL**

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (verses 15-17).

Now some have wondered why God made that strange prohibition against Adam’s eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But a man is not a whole being unless he has a free will. What is the plan of the Gospel? It is to bring sinful man to say that the will of God is best. Moreover, that is the whole trend of the Christian life.
Adam should have said that in the beginning. He should have said, “God’s will is supreme. I will gladly obey. And if God prohibits something, I will not do it.” But Adam did not say that; consequently, the world has had to learn the will of God. Fallen man has to remember that he is still a creature, accountable to his Creator.

And how about those who never learn this? They are lost. When the sinner is born again, he has to say, “I will,” to the Lord Jesus. Christ stands before him, saying: “I am your Saviour. I have died for you, and have taken your sins away. The work of salvation is finished. Will you receive Me?” And “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

My Christian friend, how is it in your daily life? Do you want God’s will above all else? Can you say from an honest heart: “The will of the Lord is supreme in my life. The will of God is best at any cost”?

In John 6:38 the Lord Jesus, the last Adam, differed from the first Adam, when He said, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” The first Adam did not abide in the will of God; the second Adam did. Our Lord came down from heaven to do what no mere man in all the history of the world has ever been able to do—to obey perfectly and wholly the will of God, with joy. When we reach the place, in our Christian experience, where it is our joy to do God’s will, no matter what the cost, then we are well pleasing unto Him. Then we are happy in Him and in the consciousness of His approval.

Dr. A. T. Pierson once said: “If the Lord should come to me and say: ‘You may do anything you please. It does not matter what you do; you will not be punished.’ If I were at liberty to do anything I wished, do you know what I should do? I should get down on my knees and say, ‘Lord, Thy will be done. I dare not choose; choose Thou for me.’”

My Christian friends, that is what Adam failed to do. He disobeyed God’s will. But you and I need not follow Adam’s example. We are saved. And we have learned by sad and bitter experience that it is always “best that He should have His way with us.”
When people ask why God put Adam and Eve to this moral test, forbidding them to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we need to tell them also that God wanted man innocent to become righteous. And innocence could not become righteousness until it had been tested, until man had been given the opportunity of exercising his will God-ward.

If Adam and Eve had not listened to Satan; if they had obeyed God, when put to the test, they would have become righteous. No doubt they would have eaten of the tree of life and become forever incapable of sin. But man did not stand the test. And since his fall, he has had to receive his righteousness as a free gift from Another, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why did God put before Adam and Eve a moral test? God wants the love of those who choose to obey Him, of their own free will. If we were machines, with no wills of our own, then our love and obedience would not be "to the praise of his glory." And even in receiving the free gift of God's righteousness in Christ Jesus, we must will to do it. He does not force Himself upon us. He wants our voluntary love, even as "the love of Christ constrains us" to want to love and obey His will.

"AND ADAM GAVE NAMES" TO ALL LIVING CREATURES

"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field" (verses 19, 20).

Someone has said that these words give absolute proof that Adam had the most marvelous mind of all men, barring only the Lord Jesus, of course. The fact here recorded shows that Adam had a mind that came directly from the Lord. If a thousand newly created animals should pass before us; if we had to give them all names, how should we ever be able to do it? Adam did it, because he had a God-
given mind, yet unmarred by the ravages of sin, full of strength and great wisdom.

There was a beautiful fellowship, in all this, between God and man. The Creator made all living things and brought them to the man to call them by name. God was seeking man’s good; man was seeking God’s glory.

But then sin entered God’s beautiful creation, and man’s fellowship with God was broken. Sin put man at an awful distance from God. Sin put fear and shame into man’s heart. And that is why our Lord had to die for fallen man, to restore the fellowship that sin ruined when man ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**“AN HELP MEET” FOR ADAM**

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him... And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (verses 18, 21, 22).

In verse 20 we read that “Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” Therefore, God put Adam into “a deep sleep,” took one of Adam’s ribs, “and the rib . . . made he a woman.” Little wonder Adam said:

“This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (verse 23).

This is the literal meaning of the word “woman”—“because she was taken out of man.”

In our next lesson we shall consider the beautiful type of Christ, the Bridegroom, and His Bride, the church, set forth here in what Gen. 2:21-24 tells us of Adam and Eve. The New Testament teaching of the union of Christ and the church is unmistakably presented here in figure and in type.
Suffice it to say just here that, out of His goodness, the Lord made "an help meet" for Adam; for God knew man's need for human companionship.

**MAN INNOCENT—UNAFRAID OF A HOLY GOD**

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (verse 25).

Clothed with "a garment of light," made "in the image and likeness of God," not knowing sin, our first parents were "not ashamed" and not afraid of a holy God.

"But," you ask, "how do you know they were clothed with 'a garment of light'?" And our answer is that they were created "in the image and likeness" of God; and the Psalmist says, "O Lord my God, thou ... coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104:1, 2).

Before sin entered the Garden of Eden, our first parents, yet innocent of all evil, had unbroken fellowship with God. But Oh, what a distance sin placed between God and fallen man! Unregenerate man is afraid to die, afraid to meet a holy God, whether his stoicism will let him admit it or not. But "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" of fellowship restored by faith in His Son, our Saviour (II Cor. 9:15)! And now, far from being afraid to meet Him, our redeemed souls cry out with longing, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." We know that, when He comes, He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself?" (Phil. 3:21).

Because "we shall be like him" (I John 3:2), we can sing even now,

"And I shall see Him face to face,            
And tell the story saved by grace."

Dear unsaved friend, will you not kneel at Calvary's Cross; confess your sins to a forgiving God; and be on your way to meet Him, unafraid and unashamed, rejoicing in His sure promise of all eternity in that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"?